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Meant to be made in China

A new model of economic and
productive specialization where culture
represents a source of added value

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table of content

Images.....4

Graphs.....5

Italian Abstract.....6

English Abstract.....8

1 Introduction 11

2 China overview 15

2.1 Brother internet..... 17

2.1.2 The one child policy 17

2.1.3 chinese web..... 19

2.2 It’s all about ME 21

2.2.1 The ME generation 21

2.2.2 Internal segmentation..... 23

3 Chinese Ferment 25

3.1 Sold art..... 26

3.1.1 Contemporary art scene..... 26

3.2 Artist with a strong Chinese market 28

3.3 Artist with a strong International market 30

3.4 Artist with both Chinese and International market 33

4 China style 35

4.1 Japanese obsession..... 35

4.2 Ma Ke 37

4.3 Christian Dior and Chinese artists..... 40

5 Chinese market 43

5.1 Made in China.....	44
5.2 Chinese fake	47
6 The new leap forward	55
7 The other side of the coin.....	59
7.1 Is the added value a real value?	61
8 What is culture made of?.....	64
8.1 Inenctions	65
8.2 There is Culture and culture	66
8.3 Culture is an important need	68
8.4 The fourth pillar of sustainability	70
8.5 Cultural identity	72
8.5.1 Just like the third Italy	75
8.6 Cultural District	78
8.7 An important transition	80
9 How to recognize the objects	83
9.1 Semiotic and Product design.....	84
9.1.1 Denotation and Connotation	87
9.1.2 Prototype e Stereotype	90
9.2 The main influence	91
9.2.1 Traceability	96
9.3 People at the basis of culture.....	98
10 High potential	100
10.1 FeiyueThe master's shoe.....	101
10.1.1 Apparent lack of culture.....	102
10.1.2 Roots and history.....	103
10.1.3 Feyiue - meant to be made in China	104
10.2 Chinese new year	105

10.2.1 Nike - meant NOT to be made in China..... 108

11 Opposites..... 109

12 Visual Brief 121

13 The system..... 131

13.1 Certification characteristics 131

References..... 135

Images

1 Liu Xiaodong, Hotbed, 2005 Oil on Canvas (www.flickr.com)	30 -31
2 Zhang Huang, 12 squared meters, 1994, Performance, Public Toilet, East Village Beijing (www.flickr.com).....	33
3 Make - WuYong, Useless, Victoria & Albert Museum London.....	41
4 Nike, Year of the Tiger, Shoes (www.nike.com)	188
5 Nike, Year of the Rat, Shoes (www.nike.com)\.....	109
6 Meant to be made in China, Logo 1	124
7 Meant to be made in China, Logo2	125
8 Meant to be made in..., Country declination.....	126
9 Meant to be made in..., Logo application, Packaging.....	127
10 Meant to be made in China, Logo application, Packaging.....	128
11 Meant to be made in China, Label example.....	129
12 Meant to be made in China, Label detail	130
13 Meant to be made in China, Label application	131

Graphs

1 Made in China influence, 2008 Interbrand	47
2 Made in China hurts Chinese brands, 2008 Interbrand.....	48
3 Basic and cheap production	50
4 Overproduction.....	52
5 disguised label	54
6 Brand appreciation, 2008 Interbrand	58
7 Cultural Capital	69
8 Hierarchy and Culture	71
9 The fourth pillar of sustainability	73
10 Ethnography in China.....	76
11 Clusters description	81
12 Material Culture.....	84
13 Cluster of cues	94
14 Traceability	99
15 Opposites, production.....	114
16 Opposites, Country of Origin and Country of Manufacture	115
17 Opposites, People.....	116
18 Opposites, Communities	117
19 Opposites, Connotativeness.....	118
20 Opposites, Denotativeness	119
21 The graph.....	120 - 121

Abstract

Il progetto investiga le possibilità di dare un senso economico-produttivo alla Cultura, che fino ad ora è sempre stata elemento esclusivamente immateriale di un prodotto.

Gli elementi usati sono molteplici, specialmente quando si cerca di capire se un oggetto si effettivamente parte della cultura di un paese o no.

La Cina sta cercando di raggiungere e sorpassare l'Occidente, l'esportazione è la risorsa economica principale del paese, ma il mondo intero ancora associa all'etichetta "made in China" concetti di bassa qualità e pericolosità.

Il governo cinese sta riponendo molti sforzi nel cercare di cambiare l'immagine del paese, spingendo l'esportazione di prodotti "created in China" piuttosto che semplicemente "made in China", ma non è mai stata analizzata la possibilità e l'importanza di produrre beni basati sulla cultura.

"cultura" è uno dei concetti più complessi da spiegare, significa tutto ciò che circonda le persone e contribuisce alla creazione di un'identità-

I prodotti "culture-based" sono il risultato di una altissima specializzazione; sono strettamente legati a un luogo, a una comunità e di conseguenza alle sue tradizioni. Tutti questi elementi creano quello che viene definito "capitale culturale" che produce valori culturali, che possono venire aggiunti a quelli economici già esistenti.

Le aziende sono costantemente sotto pressione per essere ambientalmente sostenibili, socialmente sostenibili ed economicamente sostenibili, ma difficilmente viene accennata l'esistenza di una sostenibilità culturale.

é un concetto che può essere raggiunto da quelle aziende le cui azioni controbilanciano la propria presenza o la propria scomparsa. Per esempio, quando grandi industrie abbandonano città in cui sono state per anni e intorno alle quali l'intera città ruota la propria economia, il loro spostamento ha una forza immensamente distruttiva (Danah Boyd, 2008).

Come si può capire se un prodotto, o un'azienda sono culturalmente sostenibili? Il mio progetto è finalizzato a trovare una categoria di elementi e qualità che un prodotto deve possedere per essere "meant to be made in China".

"Meant to be made in China" è una certificazione che garantisce l'approccio culturale alla produzione. Lo scopo non è la progettazione della certificazione in tutte le sue parti, ma è prevalentemente concentrato sul sistema di valutazione della produzione.

Questa tesi vuole creare un linguaggio comune capace di descrivere una produzione culturalmente sostenibile.

Fornisce un Visual Brief che descrive le modalità di inserimento dell'immagine coordinata sui prodotti, e uno schema di autovalutazione per definire le 8 qualità essenziali per raggiungere l'obiettivo di Meant to be made in China.

Questo modello vuole essere l'inizio di un più ampio lavoro che cerca di esportare il concetto della sostenibilità culturale nel resto del mondo andando così a creare diverse declinazioni: Meant to be made in India, in Turchia o qualunque altro paese.

keywords: Cultura materiale, sostenibilità culturale, Created in China, Made in China

introduzione

Tutto è iniziato quando venni informato della possibilità di una anno di studio a Shanghai (Cina) per un anno.

Non ci avevo mai pensato, ma sentivo che questa era la volta buona, non potevo farmelo scappare e il 19 febbraio 2009 partivo per Shanghai.

La Cina è un mondo nuovo, la Cina è difficile da essere raccontata, la China è un misto di colori, odori e rumori, è un gigantesco crogiolo culturale.

La parola migliore per descrivere questo paese è sicuramente “contrasti”: ricchezza e povertà, alto e basso, grosso e piccolo... o lo ami o lo odi, bisogna sempre confrontarsi con l'indecisione e la incertezza .

Dopo un breve periodo, probabilmente quando finalmente si comincia a capire i principi della loro lingua, bisogna iniziare a entrare in contatto con le persone e di conseguenza con la loro mentalità. Sembra un compito piuttosto facile, ma la Cina non smetterà mai di stupire.

Non sono ironico, non esagero, è veramente complesso capire come possano continuare a bere acqua apparentemente melmosa e sporca da un barattolo di plastica o semplicemente perché si ostinano a coprire la propria faccia con maschere da saldatore al posto di un semplice casco da moto.

é sicuramente questione di cultura.

Tutti siamo a conoscenza che le abitudini cambiano da paese a paese, sappiamo tutti che gusti e credenze sono particolarmente legate a luoghi e tempi, ma siamo davvero capaci di accettarli e integrarci nella loro cultura?

è mia abitudine leggere molto riguardo un paese prima di atterrarvi, specialmente quando so che dovrò spendervi almeno un anno. Così feci anche questa volta.

Ho scoperto un paese romantico, pieno di miti e credenze, un paese dove le persone erano abituate ad allevare grilli e cavallette per allietare con il loro frinire le fredde giornate invernali. Colui che era in grado di tenere un grillo in vita per l'intero inverno veniva eletto Maestro.

C'è un maestro per tutto, maestro della costruzione di gabbie per uccelli, maestro nello scolpire il legno, maestro di calligrafia... Quando per qualunque ragione non capisci perché un oggetto abbia un prezzo esageratamente alto, smetterai presto di domandartelo e capirai subito che è stato un maestro a costruirlo.

La Cina è il paese dove piccolissimi fischietti di finissimo bambù venivano legati alle code degli uccelli. Forme differenti creavano suoni differenti e quando uno stormo di piccioni si librava in volo diventava la voce di Dio, una sinfonia stava volando sopra le testa della gente.

È inutile cercare di esprimere le emozioni che provai quando ne venni a conoscenza.

Ho provato a parlare con i miei amici cinesi delle mie letture e scoperte, ma quello che trovavo erano solo facce dubbiose. “davvero? è questo quello che si legge della Cina?” era la loro risposta.

Parlo della mia esperienza personale ovviamente, non posso e non voglio generalizzare, ma i ragazzi cinesi non hanno mai sentito parlare di fischietti di bambù o piccioni da concerto; mi sono subito affrettato a chiedere loro se fossero interessati alla storia del proprio paese e, ovviamente, erano incredibilmente attenti. Ma cosa manca allora? qual è il tassello del puzzle che non riesco a trovare? possono parlare di Feng Shui facilmente, possono descrivere le basi della medicina cinese e di come i loro nonni insegnassero loro la cerimonia del tè, ma non sanno niente di fischietti e piccioni.

I giovani cinesi sono interessati a riportare a galla la propria cultura, ma cosa vuol dire “cultura”? è un gioco di parole, ma ancora è “questione di cultura”.

Abstract

The project investigates into the possibilities to give an economic and productive meaning to Culture, which, so far, it has been an exclusively immaterial element of the product.

The elements used in the investigation are manifold, especially when we have to understand whether an object is part of the culture of a country or not.

China is trying to catch up the West, the exportation of goods is one of the main economic sources of the country, but the whole world still associates the label made in China with low quality and dangerous products.

Chinese government is willing to improve the image of the country by pushing the exportation of goods created in China rather than simply made in China, but it is never been examined the importance of producing culture based goods.

Culture is one of the most difficult concepts to explain, it means everything that surrounds people and contributes to the creation of an identity.

Culture based products are the result of a high specialization; they are closely linked to a place, to a community and its traditions. All these elements create what is called the cultural capital that goes around and produces cultural values, which are added to the already existing economic ones.

There are numerous points of pressure placed on companies right now to be environmentally sustainable, socially sustainable and economic sustainable, but what about Cultural sustainability? The idea of cultural sustainability

is about companies whose actions offset the consequences of their presence (or disappearance). For example, when large companies abandon cities that they've been in for years and where the entire city revolves around them, their move has a huge culturally destructive force (Danah Boyd, 2008).

How do we understand if a product, or a company are culturally sustainable? My project aims to find and categorize the elements and qualities that a product has to have in order to be Meant to be made in China.

Meant to be made in China is a certification that guarantees the cultural approach of the production. The project's aim is not to design a certification in all its parts, how to get it and what are the agencies that will provide the certification, but it is more concentrated on the system of evaluation of an object.

This thesis wants to create a common language able to describe a culturally sustainable production.

I provide a visual brief describing how to insert the certification in the packaging of the objects, and I designed a tool to evaluate whether a company is using a cultural approach or not.

Key Words: Material culture, cultural sustainability, Created in China, Made in China

1 Introduction

Everything started when I was informed about the possibility to move to Shanghai (China) for one year.

I had never thought about it, but I felt that this was the chance I couldn't miss and the 19th of February 2009 I left to Shanghai.

China is a new world, China is difficult to be explained, China is a mixture of colors, of smells and noises, it is a gigantic culture melting pot.

The best word to describe this country is surely contrasts: rich and poor, tall and short, big and small.... You either like it or hate it, you always have to deal with indecision and questioning yourself whether you love this place or you hate it.

After a while, perhaps when you finally get to understand a bit of their language, you have to get in touch with the people and consequently with their mentality. It seems an easy task, but China will never stop to amaze you.

I am not being ironic, I am not exaggerating, it is really tough to understand why these people keep drinking an apparent dirty and slimy water out of a plastic cup, or why bikers cover their face with a welding mask instead of a simple helmet.

It is surely a matter of culture. This is the first assumption one has to make.

We all know that habits differ from Country to Country, we know that tastes and beliefs are particularly linked to spaces and times, but do we really know

how to “accept” them and how to integrate ourselves into other cultures?

It is my habit to read about a Country before landing there, especially when I know that I will have to live there and absorb their habits for at least one year, and so I did this time.

I discovered a romantic Country, full of myths and romantic beliefs, a Country where people used to breed grasshoppers and crickets in order to be pleased by their noises during cold winters. The one who will be able to keep a cricket alive for the whole winter will be elected master.

There is a master for everything, master in building birdcages, master in carving wood, master in calligraphy.... When for any reason you do not understand why an object is insanely overpriced you will understand that it was a master who made it, and after a while you will stop questioning, you will know the answer by yourself.

China is a Country where little whistles made of fine and precious bamboo were tied to birds’ tales. Different shapes made different noises and when a flock of pigeons was flying over the city it became the voice of God, a symphony was flying over people’s heads.

It is useless to express my emotions when I found all this out.

I tried to speak with Chinese guys about my readings, but I found doubting faces and shaking heads. “Seriously? Is this what you read about China?” they used to ask me.

I talk about my own experience of course, I cannot and I do not intend to generalize, but Chinese had never heard of whistles and pigeons; then I asked whether they were interested in their history or not and, of course, they were incredibly concerned about their past. But what is missing then? They can talk about feng shui easily, they can talk about the basis of Chinese medicine and of how their grandparents used to teach them the tea ceremony, but they

do not know anything about whistles and pigeons.

Chinese young people are willing to bring up their culture, but what do they consider as culture? It is a word game, but again it's a matter of culture.

2 China overview

China is big, overpopulated and full of contradictions. In order to have a real holistic approach to this country it's important to look at all its facets.

Since Mao's fall, China saw a fast succession of people, trends and behaviors; new generations are totally different from the previous ones, the speed with which this country is changing is impressing chinese people themselves who find it difficult to catch up.

Humans relations change, desires are reshaped and sons' dreams fight with their parents'.

I wanted to look at china's background from different points of view, starting from sociology and anthropology arriving to chinese economy and market approach

2.1 Brother internet

The One child policy was born at the end of 70s in order to face the dramatic increase of chinese population; after two generation the results are starting to be visible not only in the pure demography, but also and especially in chinese behaviors and their social dynamics.

2.1.2 The *one child policy*

The policy consists in a series of regulations meant to reduce the dimension of chinese households. These rules include number restrictions, late marriages and fixed timing between pregnancies (when the second child is allowed).

In the law itself few exceptions are present, in the rural areas for instance, in families with one daughter, after her 5th year it's allowed to have a second child.

This is a clear acknowledgment of the traditional preference for sons over daughters.

It leads inexorably to a series of illegal precautions to repress the birth of female children, late abortions (after knowing the sex of the child), or frequent

abandons

The main consequence of this practice is an unbalance relation between male and female subjects.

Second effect of one child policy is the exaggerated increasing of the population age. There are few young people taking care of their old parents.

Sons are spoiled and treated with extreme care by their parents hoping that they'll get it back when there will be the need in the future.

Boys grow up in small families, they are losing the concept of uncles and aunts and the relations with the others are difficult.

Hang Hui, Chief marketing officer of PepsiCo International, said about chinese young people that it's the world's loneliest generation, within those born in the post-80s, there are 470 million and their world is very different. The 'Gang of Four' is a thing of the past. The Cultural Revolution is an art movement. They are brought up by their grandparents because their parents were working. They live in one household, shaped by three generations .

Web social networks and mobile phones are getting more and more important and they are slowly replacing human relations.

2.1.3 chinese web

The demonstration of web's importance is the tendency to use Skype, Msn and QQ at the workplace for internal communications also between desk partners.

More and more offices tolerate, sometimes they even require, the presence and the use of instant messaging softwares and it is significant that 90% of chinese avatars are cartoon characters or celebrities instead of a real picture.

Despite USA and Europe, chinese medias are mainly dominated by local players.

The most known social networks like facebook and twitter and video sharing channels like youtube have been taken over by Ren ren, Sina, QQ or tudou.

The reasons are manifold, first of all the government censorship, language and chinese characters and marketing strategies targeted to chinese consumers.

It is the chinese cyber citizen himself who moves away from his western alter ego because of tastes and consumption habits. He deserves proper and specific marketing strategies.

Chinese web users are mainly grown up in urban areas, they have an average income lower than 2000 RMB (200€) and access to internet through mobile devices.

The main reason why they surf on internet is entertainment (online social games), the second reason is communication (msn and qq) and just as a third reason for studying and working.

It's important to note that for a chinese citizen, grown up in a society where

censorship is largely tolerated and practiced, web represents a safe place in which is possible to communicate his own ideas and say whatever he wouldn't be able to say offline.

80% of web users takes for granted online feedbacks before buying anything, researches news and posts feedback himself right after a purchase and even if he is not going to buy a new product he pays attention on internet word of mouth.

2.2 It's all about ME

ME generation is young, about 30 years old, rich, independent and concentrated on itself.

They are the one who lead chinese economy, the new lonely chinese pulled by wild consumerism. They use english words to beautify their language and drink coffee at Starbucks.

2.2.1 The ME generation

In October 2007 Beijing Government tries to issue a decree to limit the number of animals per household to one subject not taller than 35 cm; It's been one of the very few times when hundreds of rich well-heeled chinese came to claim their rights, but the immediate call in by the chinese leader was even more unpredictable .

It might appear absurd the immediate reaction for an apparently futile reason, but it's indicative of the changing times. For chinese people it's becoming more and more important to keep and show their status symbols, like a dog in this case.

It's difficult to find a thirty-year-old guy talking about politics and it's even more difficult to find an activist willing to make people understand his point; It doesn't matter what the government in Beijing does, as long as they don't touch what they have been able to gain so far.

They are thirty years old, they have studied in America and drink coffee at Starbucks. Their parents are afraid that their children could experience what they did in the past, the difficult life in the communes, the efforts to arrive where they are now; if in the 40s communism was spreading now we are in the age of wild consumerism, no matter what to buy, it's important to have it.

If I get the chance to go skydiving the first time then I have to buy the equipment and when I finally have it, it doesn't have to be ugly compared to the others', the experience and the sport doesn't matter so much, I'm not even able to sky! would say a Chinese girl during Christmas holidays.

Christmas and Halloween became occasions to show off that West has gotten into Shanghai, it's not important to know the pagan or religious meanings behind, it's enough to have a big and bright Christmas tree in the garden and blinking pumpkins within the end of October.

They live in Shanghai, on Monday they have private French lessons, on Wednesday they play tennis and the weekend days are the busiest. They start the night changing different places and clubs with their new car and the main topic is the dilemma about marrying a French guy, romantic and passionate or an American one, pragmatic and rich.

2.2.2 Internal segmentation

Inside of ME generation there is more differentiation and segmentation. The new rich - their parents are not incredibly rich, they work hard to buy the last Vuitton bag and buy cars able to demonstrate their status.

The Understaters, love no brands, Muji and Miyake, they move around by bike and reorganize themselves in subgroups. Their parents were grown up with a wealth life and studied abroad.

The connoisseur are part of a lucky niche of people who also in the past didn't suffer from Maoist restrictions, probably because themselves members of the party. They have a broader culture from history to economy, the look for particular things and care about details. They are proud to be chinese but they also hope to have a further leap forward.

ABCs, America Born Chinese who come back to China to find out their origins. They have a totally western background with chinese shades given by the parents. They refuse everything from America and dig into oriental philosophies in order to find their real lives.

3 Chinese Ferment

It's China's moment now. Everything is fervent, passionate, intense.

Now China feels the urge to jump over the edge of a world factory and walk onto the highway of created in China.

Chinese artists are starting their own artistic movements, Design is the most request faculty at the university and Vogue China almost definitively has stolen the importance to Vogue America.

In the past Chinese manufacturers used to treat the rough materials according client's needs, assemble all the components as the client needs and at the end revise it following the examples given by the clients. No creative process at all.

3.1 Sold art

It's still complicated to talk about chinese contemporary art without defining it as an industrial model.

But something is changing and often the avant-garde arts shape the future. Chinese art becomes ambassador of a country that is trying to come out of it's own suffocating borders.

3.1.1 Contemporary art scene

During the first half of 90s the West invented the term chineseness to indicate a particular quality of chinese art. This was seen as an anomaly, its ideas were neither original nor linked to the country. Its shapes were taken by others' and english critics accused China to produce only mere copies of western art.

From 2000, tremendous commercial growth as contemporary Chinese art incorporated into global art market

Increasing number of foreigners living in and visiting China, expands the mainland's collecting base

Contemporary Chinese art becomes the focus of numerous academic and curatorial efforts by leading Western curators, which generated greater awareness about Chinese art while also expanding its viewing public

Market growth was fueled by a combination of an expanding collector base and speculation

Despite the actual high visibility of Chinese art, it's quite difficult to talk and write about it; there is a lack of education, it doesn't exist a centenary tradition because it's been totally erased by the recent history and there are no books where to find any answer to any question¹.

Unfortunately consumerism is getting into the roots of artistic movements, when an artist starts being noticed and appreciated he starts to become an industrial model rather than a creative process.

Thousands of pieces similar to each other are sold causing a progressive impoverishment of the art-pieces. It's yet very different the approach of a Chinese user, his tastes are extremely different and they underline the same segmentation dynamics that can be found in marketing.

It's important to create a network of international critics and a proper net of galleries, this will push the rise of art users.

1. Li Xianting, Songzhuang Art Festival's Conference of Collectors of Chinese Contemporary Art in 2009

3.2 Artist with a strong Chinese market

Liu Xiaodong is a painter. His art begins and ends with the act of painting. The impulse derives from a constant questioning of how to engage the medium. There is always a time, an instant, when the moment is right to paint, for him to turn off the phone, squeeze out the oil colors and begin; to transform emptiness into space, blankness into form, and picture plane into a vivid scene from contemporary Chinese life.



In Liu Xiaodong's paintings, we habitually find familiar faces, gestures and situations: even where he uses a technique similar to that which photographers such as Richard Avedon or Diane Arbus adopted in their work with portraiture, which turned the focus on truly ordinary people and the overlooked dilemmas of their humble existence, as well as freakish characters who fell obliged to keep a low profile, and are shy when so observed because they never imagined themselves the subject of an artistic study. These are people that we pass daily on the streets, in the workplace, on the commute from the suburbs to the city...and to whom we barely give a second thought. Either they are too similar to ourselves and our own predicaments, or, just too ordinary to register upon our consciousness. It is the very everydayness of these things that lead us to take them for granted, and why they have such a magnetizing quality when invoked by Liu Xiaodong on the picture plane.

Figure 1



3.3 Artist with a strong International market

Zhang's performances always involve his body in one way or another, usually naked, occasionally involving masochistic actions; he cites the body as a primary method of communication, describing it as the only means by which people experience the world and vice versa. By using quasi-religious ritual, he seeks to discover the point at which the spiritual can manifest via the corporeal. He uses simple repetitive gestures, usually regarded as meaningless work-for-work's-sake chores. Buddhism, with its temple music, sculptures and philosophy are a prevalent theme in Zhang Huan's work.

Zhang is considered one of the most influential artists who belonged to the group 'Beijing East Village,' a kind of art colony located in the rural outskirts of Beijing. There artists would perform works exploring issues surrounding consumerism, sexuality, gender and personal suffering in or around their homes. Zhang chooses performance as his primary art form because of its inherent relationship with the body. The performance "To Add One Meter



to an Anonymous Mountain” took place in the Chinese countryside; several performers lie on top of the other in a blunted pyramid; it is an odd but affecting image which takes human presence and renders it anonymous.

3.4 Artist with both Chinese and International market

Zeng Fanzhi (1964), Wuhan Province, is known for his powerful characters with raised gazes, over dimensional hands and stereotypical faces. In his “Mask” series, he adds to the characters faces a white but translucent mask which smoothly fits the natural contours of the faces, giving the viewer an eerie feeling.

With his correct but detached figures, Fanzhi simulates a certain fatigue with the contemporary society in which consumerism climaxes and leads to loneliness and total alienation from society and oneself. His paintings are so rich in expression that we are reminded of the explanatory power art can attain.

Zeng Fanzhi studied oil painting at the Art Academy of Wuhan and lives and works today in Beijing.

He has exhibited internationally in shows including the First Triennial of Chinese Arts at Guangzhou Art Museum, China, China! at the Bonn Kunstmuseum in Germany and Paris – Pekin at Pierre Cardin in Paris. He is noted for his Mask series of portraits depicting Chinese people of the 1990s. In May 2008, one of them, Mask Series 1996 No. 6, was auctioned for \$9.7 million, a record for contemporary Asian art.

4 China style

Chinese fashion industry in the 20th century did not grow from an acorn, but rather from a neglected sapling²

The history of chinese fashion dates back to long time ago, its textiles, its finishes are imprinted in the memories of the old people, but only after the 70s it has to take back everything it's been taken away and start from scratch again.

4.1 Japanese obsession

Like in the artistic field also the fashion world in China is strictly linked to the idea of being copied by western fashion.

Chinese people copy, recreate and use as example whatever comes from the West, this is the common sentence said not just by western people but also by Chinese themselves.

In China the satisfaction is strictly linked to economic success; this is a concept which creates a constant research for consumeristic success that is dragging China in a reality which should stay far away from the art world.

2. China on the catwalk: between economic success and nationalist anxiety, The China Quarterly, Cambridge university press, Antonia Finnane

There is a constant performance anxiety fed by their japanese neighbors. Japan succeeded in creating myths able to be exported obtaining an enormous economic success.

China, despite the extraordinary success of their textiles, silk and readymade fashion, are not able to recreate their own Issey Miyake and this is becoming an obsession. They are forgetting to look at what they already have, a vivid environment, interested and ready for the quality leap.

4.2 Ma Ke

Ma Ke is a contemporary Chinese artist who works in fashion industry, she takes the distance from her chinese colleagues taking a clear position on different topics.

She talks about environmental crisis, world social changes but above all about her own country, she talks about the role of designers and about the huge mistakes that China is making in the last decades.

Ma Ke is trying to elevate the role of designers treating her collections like real manifests.

“(...) My journeys into the remote countryside, far away from urban life, carry me to deeper thoughts and explorations of the values of life. I am no longer satisfied by the practical ornamental functions of clothing that are changing in modality, nor breakthroughs in forms, much less does the drive for reputation or profit enter into my work. I yearn strongly for clothing to stand as does paint to painter, as does stone to the sculptor, as a simple and particular language of an individual creation which draws the audience from an appreciation of the surface to deeper thoughts and conversations with the world of the soul. (...)

The spiritual qualities which i pursue stand in complete opposition to the trends of modern fashion, what i find profoundly engaging are the primitive eras of human his-

tory, when people held nature in the deepest reverence and made objects of the utmost simplicity. Whose crafts fashioned-out of necessity, and not by the hands of celebrated masters, possess a power that can endure across the ages. These designs may still resonate through the millennia and arrest the values of contemporary fashion. this is what i have pursued, for clothing to return to its original simplicity.(...)

What age are we living in at present? after thousands of years of agricultural civilization and a couple of hundred years of global industrialization which have exceeded the human output of all previous history people now possess an over-abundance of things, and yet in our super-commercialized world, have desires that are ever harder to satisfy.

This is a world of the exceeding polarization of rich and poor, a world of conflicts and never ending wars. now, in the 21st century, after 200 years of industrial over-development we have to face a deepening environmental crisis caused by shortsightedness and a radicalization of human activity, while the internet has made the world smaller. Our resources are running out, while our desires are pro-life Cultural variety and regional diversity are being assimilated through economic globalization. Traditional craftsmanship is disappearing from our daily life, and can now only be found in museum exhibits. Through these tremendous social changes, my country is undergoing a heart-breaking loss of tradition for the sake of an irresponsible pursuit of the future.

Faced with such a world, designers should no longer continue the pursuit of profit and efficiency, which characterized the industrial age. (...). Designers, who are the creators of the living environment, must no longer isolate themselves and indulge in luxury and dreams. If you have ever seen the real world, you will realize that the need for the designers to take on new responsibilities. the age of individualism is coming to an end, while the age of commonality and mutual growth is beginning. This is a question of survival, and the transcendence of human nature.”³

3. Ma Ke's vision - www.wuyonguseless.com



4.3 Christian Dior and Chinese artists

Christian Dior in November 2008 takes advantage of the mass media exposure of Chinese Olympic games and exhibit in Beijing to be noticed.

The exhibition obtain an enormous success testifying the tight link between China, art and business, especially when luxury is the main topic.

“Christian Dior and Chinese Artists, which opened November 15 at Beijing’s Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, is the latest public clinch between fashion and art. As well as sumptuous and outrageously flamboyant recent Dior pieces by John Galliano and original Christian Dior creations, the show also features specially commissioned works by top Chinese artists, whose brief was to comment on what Dior is, stands for, or makes - basically they had to artistically express Dior.

Conceptually it’s a mixed bag but the ambition and visual results are pretty amazing. Li Songsong’s 23-feet high Lady Dior Bag is made out of carefully interlaced fluorescent tubes; Wang Qingsong has created an epic Last Supper featuring beautiful fashion models in new Galliano outfits and the artist himself as Jesus in hospital pyjamas (hospital drips replace the holy bread and wine). There’s also a recreation of the Dior atelier in white porcelain by the ceramicist Liu Jianhua,

and a ten feet high painting of Galliano by graffiti artist Zhang Dali (whose graffiti tag is 'AK 47').

Chinese art has been hot for at least ten years but never hotter than now. It follows contemporary art everywhere in being rather attention grabbing and sensational, shunning abstraction and subtlety, going for the headlines, but it deserves special consideration because of the unique historical context.

Until relatively recently Chinese art was all official bland portraits of the leader and slogan-infested propaganda for heroic workers. As China opened up to the west economically, the official hold on art was relaxed and artists emerged who were willing to respond to the odd new situation that China found itself in.

A new society, neither east nor west but a hybrid of the two, with the general population full of anxiety about the new spirit of the times: afraid that progress might be overwhelming and at the same time that it might not come fast enough. That weird double-edged threat/promise explains the mood of new Chinese art, and the appeal in particular of this art and fashion celebration. It's not a lot of mutual back slapping, but a rather strange party full of bizarre bitter-sweet sights.

For 'Christian Dior and Chinese Artists' Lu Hao makes a huge architectural installation out of Plexiglas that houses the 'muguet,' the iconic Dior flower. Lu Hao is famous for using his architectural pieces to comment on the real estate scams that go on in China, where buildings will go up very quickly once the finance is in place but the buildings remain half finished and empty of residents. Wang Qing-song's Last Supper is also situated in a mock-up of such a building. The artists want to celebrate luxury but also draw attention to injustice: they don't just say the right left-leaning things – they really go for it.”⁴

4. Christian Dior and Chinese Artists, Wallpaper, Matthew Collings 18 Nov. 2008

5 Chinese market

M*ade in China*” refers to products produced in factories set up by multinational companies in China. In these cases, the Chinese do not necessarily have the intellectual property rights to the products. “Created in China” refers to products actually invented in China, for example, national brands which have developed their own products. The change from “Made in China” to “Created in China” is one of the important goals of the 11th Five-Year Plan. In recent years, China has taken important steps in independent innovation. But we can’t say that we’ve completed the transition. To reach this target, we should not only increase investment but endeavor to guarantee institutional mechanisms and personnel support in this field.¹

Thus the main difference between Made in China and created in China is that talking about the first one Chinese don not own the Intellectual Property right (IP) to the products, in the second case we describe those products produced and invented in China with their own identity, consequently chinese do own the Intellectual property rights and above all the know-how.

1. Professor Zhou Shaopeng, director and doctoral advisor of the Department of Economics at the China National School of Administration

5.1 Made in China

From a research made by Interbrand in 2008 it's evident that the western perception of China is extremely related with low price, poor quality, safety issues and fake.

The country of origin label is often a significant factor in a purchase decision and it is demonstrated by the fact that 40% of consumers is aware of it and checks the label before buying any product.

After the purchase only 6% of consumers likes to buy products made in China and is interested in buying brands from China.

In some cases when a product is associated to low price it might not be a bad value, especially when the whole world is suffering a weak economy, but in the case of China this value is too related with lack of technology and lack of advanced manufactory management

from the exhibit in the following page is also visible how familiarity and experience with China alone is not enough to win consumers confidence.

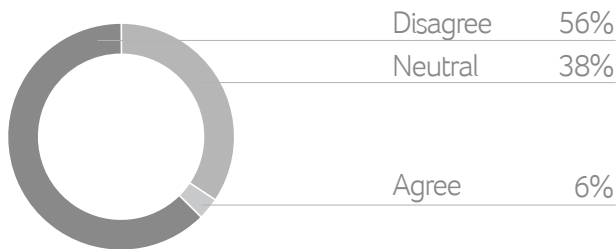
In 2008 China's government put a huge effort and a lot of money in raising the image of the country, the magnificent display during the Olympics impressed billions of people all around the world, but something ruined everything.

The poisoned milk was just a new scandal to add to the previous ones, faulty

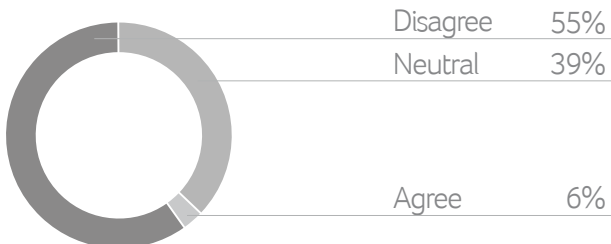
tires, poisonous pet food and counterfeiting.

China has to deal with a reputation extremely difficult to be forgotten and people around the world are keener to forget the good things rather the bad ones.

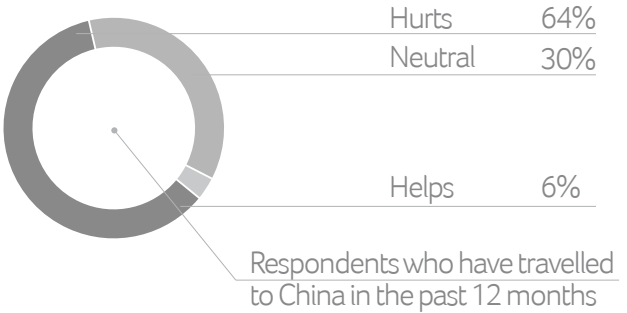
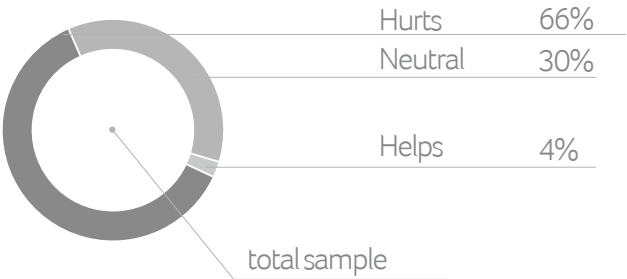
I like to buy products made in China.



I am interested in buying brands from China.



Do you believe the Made in China label
helps or hurts Chinese brands today?



5.2 Chinese fake

China has the most serious counterfeiting problem in world history. According to recent estimates by the PRC's own State Council Research and Development, in 2001 China was flooded with between \$19-\$24 billion worth of counterfeit goods. This figure, although substantial, may underestimate the size of the problem. Brand owners estimate that between 15-20% of all well known brands in China are counterfeit. Brand owners claim that they are losing tens of billions of dollars in China due to counterfeiting. Microsoft's annual losses alone due to commercial piracy in China are estimated to be \$10 billion.

Counterfeiting is now estimated to account for 8% of China's gross domestic product. Many municipalities and towns in China depend upon counterfeiting to sustain their local economies. There are millions of people, perhaps tens of millions of people, involved in counterfeiting in China. There are hundreds of thousands of people involved in anti-counterfeiting.²

80% of all counterfeit goods comes from China and it's shipped to South east Asia, Central Asia, Middle-east, east Europe, latin America and Africa (Nigeria), the last three countries will spread the products to different areas

2. Counterfeiting and China's economic development, Professor Daniel C.K. Chow, The Ohio State University College of Law, June 8, 2006

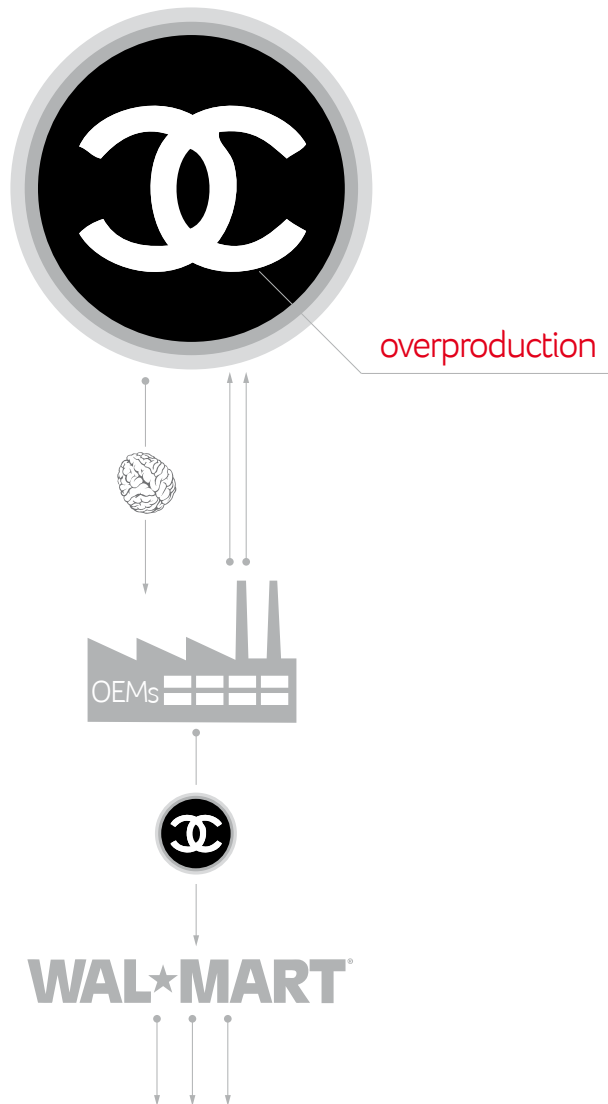


OEMs try to copy other companies and create kind of clones with no clue about how to do them the items are done roughly, get broken easily and are cheap. labels may be copied or disguised

such as west Europe, USA and North Africa.

China's unprecedented economic growth through the decade of the 1990s was fueled in large part by a substantial infusion of foreign direct investment (FDI), much of it by the world's leading multi-national enterprises (MNEs). FDI is the best means of technology transfer in the world today. In addition to the capital that is injected, FDI often involves the transfer of patents, copyrights, trademarks and other forms of intellectual property as part of the process of investment. In many cases, the intellectual property component of the FDI is the most important part of the investment. For example, the value to Coca-Cola of its trademark is worth many times more than the hundreds of millions of dollars that Coca-Cola has invested in China. China is using its unprecedented access to some of the world's most advanced technology as a means of leapfrogging into the modern industrial age. China has been able to use this technology to upgrade its industries and to become globally competitive in a short span of time.

For example, in the 1980s, China began as an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) for a number of multi-national companies in producing color television sets that were distributed under various international brand names. These MNEs provided detailed specifications and technical training and assistance to Chinese manufacturers. Once the Chinese OEMs manufactured these TVs, the MNEs would put their private labels on these sets and sell them under their own brands. Having developed OEM capabilities, absorbed technology, and learned about distribution, supply, and marketing from MNEs, China now makes TVs directly for export to large distributors, such as Wal-Mart and Costco. In the short span of a decade, China has become a dominant player in the area of televisions and other consumer electronic goods.



MNEs delocalize the production to China setting up training programs for the workers. The factory legitimately gains know-how.

OEMs deliberately overproduce thousands of items selling them directly to their own market channels, dropping the price because of lack of management prowess and marketing campaigns.

The manufacture of counterfeit goods in China tends to be concentrated in southern China in Guangdong and Fujian Provinces, among the first areas opened to FDI. Guangdong is the ancestral home of many people living in Hong Kong and Fujian is the ancestral home of many people living in Taiwan. Criminal organizations in Hong Kong and Taiwan, many of which are also involved in smuggling, narcotics, and prostitution, are now involved in the highly lucrative trade in counterfeit goods. These criminal organizations help to finance the start-up costs for the factories manufacturing counterfeit goods and use international borders to create barriers against law enforcement. The distribution of counterfeit goods takes place through a series of wholesale markets that are located throughout China. The manufacture of counterfeit goods is not of much use if the goods do not reach the end use consumer. Many of these wholesale markets are financed and established by local governments. Retail and secondary-level wholesale distributors travel to these wholesale markets to order counterfeit goods that are then shipped to densely populated urban areas in China, other locations in China, and overseas. The role of counterfeiting in supporting local economies can be seen in a study of Yiwu, well known as a major distribution center for counterfeits and pirated goods in China. In 1982, the Yiwu government invested \$10 million in establishing the Zhejiang China Small Commodities City Group (CSCG), a wholesale market specializing in the trade small commodities, such as household products. Each day about 200,000 people visit the market to purchase goods from among over 400,000 different varieties of items. About 8,000 foreign buyers visit the market each day. Each day 2 tons of goods are purchased. The highways and roads to and from Yiwu are heavily congested day and night with trucks coming from the South that deliver counterfeit goods to Yiwu and trucks leaving Yiwu loaded with coun-



OEMs that already gained the know-how start a new production by their own. The items are similar to the real ones, but with the disguised label.

terfeits that have been purchased and are bound for locations throughout China. About 80-90% of all goods offered for sale in Yiwu are counterfeit or infringing goods. The CSCG and the trade in counterfeit goods has become essential to the local economy. In the 1990s, the CSCG accounted for nearly 26% of the entire tax revenues of the city and was the single largest taxpayer in the municipality. The payment of tax is essential because it integrates the CSCG and the trade in counterfeit goods into the local economy. In addition to paying taxes, the CGSC and its illegal trade in counterfeit goods has given rise to a whole host of other legitimate businesses that support the trade. Hotels, restaurants, night clubs, transportation companies, and warehouse and storage facilities all depend on the trade in counterfeit goods. Shutting down the trade in counterfeit goods in Yiwu would result in shutting down the local economy and would lead to the closing of many businesses and high levels of unemployment. A shutdown may also lead to social chaos and unrest, which the PRC government fears more than anything else. A small town by China's standards, Yiwu has a population of about 650,000, the bulk of which depend upon the trade in counterfeit goods. There are hundreds of other towns like Yiwu in China that depend upon the trade in counterfeit goods to sustain the local economy. All told there are likely millions, if not tens of millions, of people in China who depend directly or indirectly on the trade in counterfeit goods for their economic livelihood and survival. A nationwide crackdown would impose significant costs on the PRC government, as it would need to expend significant resources and political capital to deal with the massive economic and social problems that would likely arise as a result.

Although counterfeiting is a massive problem, China is a one-party authoritarian state that can bring to bear the full coercive power of the state to re-

solve any single economic or social problem. China was able to effectively resolve the problem of rampant smuggling in the 1990s and has used swift and effective measures to control other widespread social and economic problems. There is no doubt that if the political will existed, China could bring counterfeiting under control within a short span of time – a year or two at the latest.

6 The new leap forward

In march 2009 Premier Wen Jiabao called for China to create companies that can innovate and churn out brand-name export products.

In the 11th five-year plan, the government set the shift from made in China towards created in China as an important goal.

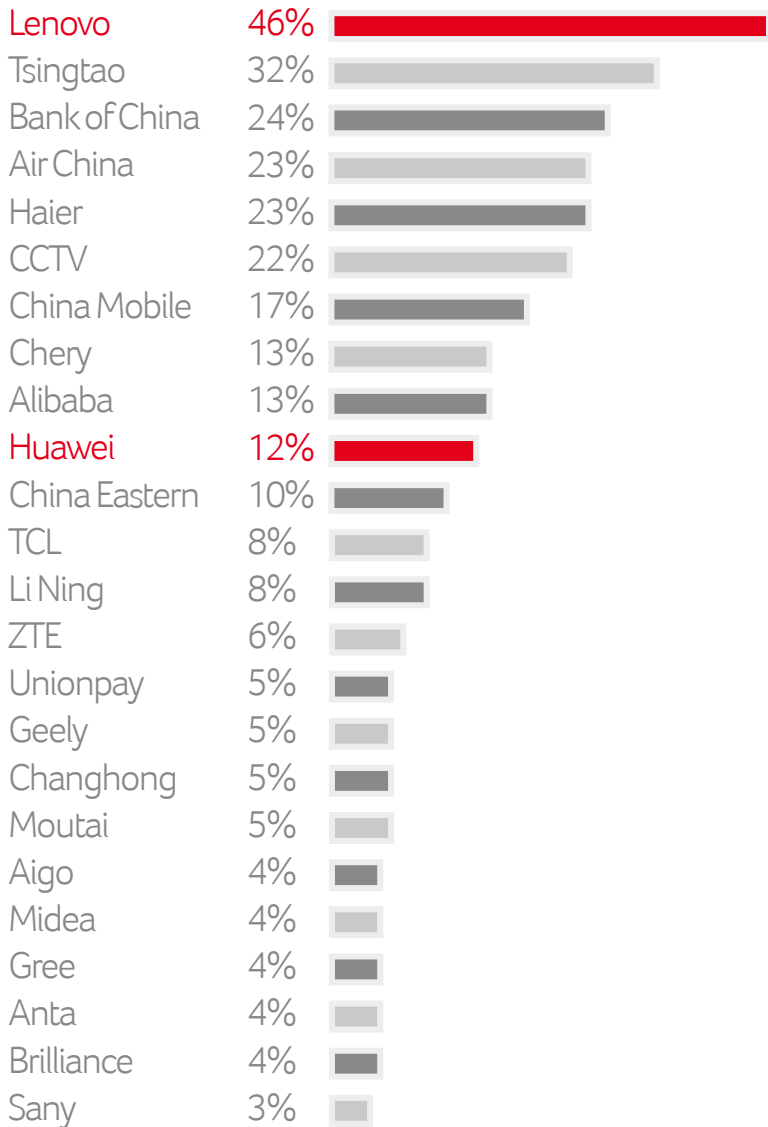
(exhibit 12 interbrand)

But if we look at the level of familiarity with Chinese brand by non-chinese people we may notice that the first one is Lenovo, but we also know that in 2004 Lenovo took over IBM and they are still keeping the New York headquarters with its manager personnel.

Basically Lenovo is enjoying the reign created by IBM, and now it's the 4th largest PCs maker in the world.

If we have a better look at the exhibit we notice that the 10th position is occupied by Huawei. It may appear absurd, but one of six people around the globe use Huawei products, probably without even knowing it.

Founded in 1988 by a former People's Liberation Army officer with less than \$4,000 in startup capital, Huawei has grown from a small importer to a growing giant. Revenue rose 43% in 2008 to more than \$18 billion. The next



OEMs try to copy other companies and create kind of clones with no clue about how to do them the items are done roughly, get broken easily and are cheap. labels may be copied or disguised

step they are willing to take is the overtaking of Nokia Siemens as the world's second larger maker of telecom hardware, after Ericsson.

The headquarter of Huawei in Shenzhen look like a Silicon Valley transplant, with high-tech laboratories, manicured lawns and staff swimming pools. It made Business Week's latest list of the world 10 "most influential" companies, alongside Apple, Wal-Mart, Toyota and Google.

But talking about Huawei, outside China even the staff have trouble pronouncing its name.³

Huawei is wholly chinese but they do mainly B2B transactions (Just some of their clients are T-mobile, Orange, Vodafone).

Consumers don't get to know about Huawei.

No consumer marketing, no advertising, this company remains proudly a company of engineers, for engineers. It has a tiny marketing and advertising departments that spend a fraction of what Western competitors do as percentage of revenue.

Chinese company are still afraid to say to the world that they are Chinese and prefer to stay in the shadow rather than come out.

In order to take the plunge and being recognized for created in China all-over the world, they have to fulfill some basic needs.

China needs to accelerate the establishment of an enterprise and market-oriented technological innovation system which combines manufacturing, studying and research as a whole.

the country needs to improve the market environment for technical innovation, accelerate the development of entrepreneurial risk investment, and improve technical advice, technology transfer and other intermediary ser-

3. Generic Giants - China is the world's factory, but its top firms remain oddly anonymous - Craig Simon, News Week - Jul 27, 2009

vices.

It is necessary to make a good use of global scientific and technological resources, continue to introduce advanced technology from foreign countries, and participate in international scientific and technological exchanges.

Effort should be made to strengthen the protection of Intellectual Property. Ineffective protection of IP rights is having a major effect on technological innovation. China's intellectual property protection system is not perfect yet. The nation, society and enterprises need to work together.

Enterprises need to endeavor to realize sustainable development by increasing awareness of independent innovation and accelerating innovative and technological progress. Some enterprises don't prioritize independent innovation and rely on other's technology. This is not conducive to the sustainable development of enterprises. Some do not manage funds well, either investing too heavily in research and development, thereby affecting everyday production, or not investing enough or at all. Businesses should gradually increase expenditure on research and development while ensuring that normal production and operation continues.

They also must identify the right field in which to invest in Research and Development. The aim of R&D is to develop new products, so enterprises should focus their energies.

7 The other side of the coin

One of the biggest problems that arises as soon as the word made in china comes out is the Intellectual Property theft.

Many Chinese companies base their productions on competencies gained from previous customers, but many others managed to import original machinery from Italy. This practice allowed them to produce as good as italian competitors.

It's never mentioned the attempts made by italian firms to export to China. This is such a wise market able to guarantee always a good profit.

But this practice implies also the exportation of italian machineries, then legitimately sold to chinese firms along with a training program meant to teach them how to handle these machineries.

We never talk about the economic game behind made in Italy and especially all the specialization courses sold at great cost, workshops given by outstanding cooks or eminent napolitan tailors.

everything is obviously an activity that creates made in italy itself but it is also one of the main revenues; the same italian companies will then complain about Intellectual Property theft.

The de-localized production is a silent admission to be creators of a commerce based on unsustainable work conditions and against human rights.

Italian companies complain about unfair competition because of the drop of price, but they are the ones that use it, just by hiding the label and the country of production.

the companies most hurt by counterfeiting are surely those working in the luxury field, like Vuitton or Gucci for example always complain a huge economic loss because of industry of fake. But if we have a closer look we can easily assume that the reference target of those companies is totally different from the one one who buys fake bags.

7.1 Is the added value a real value?

The very first problem i should look at is the sale of objects passed of as original ones.

But if we look better at this issue we can notice an intrinsic error: the average client who buys those objects is totally aware that he is purchasing something that was not fabricated by the original factories. the action of buying it elevates the object itself to original. The purchaser buys an original copy of an object.

Plato affirmed that every art piece is a mere copy of a body existing in the nature that yet is a imitation of its idea. Probably it doesn't exist a border line between truth and false, probably everything is a original object or, on the contrary, copied one.

It's been striking a painting by De Chirico that ended up in my hands lately. It made me remember his tendency to fake himself by copying his own paintings, backdating other ones and authorizing other painters' copies.

Objects judged as originals for decades by art critics and sold for thousands of dollars suddenly lost their value after the discovery of the authorized

fraud.

Other art critics tried to plead for him trying to explain that the process of faking his own paintings improved the originality of the pieces, Andy Warhol found it delightful, but what is right and what is wrong? In the art field it's a rather complicated process that spins around a bunch of art critics and art dealers.

In the world of design we talk about "added value", marketing, research, retail ... anything that spins around the brand legitimates the sale of bags for thousands of euros, although the materials used are cheap and the fabrication processes are the same of the ones used for those bags, publically and honestly made in China.

Is there something missing when i buy a bag made in China but totally identical to the one sold in a real boutique? probably just the moment when i purchase the product, that moment called retail experience, when snobby salesmen in Milan or in Paris treat you as you were their best customer.

The sense of belonging to an elite, the capability to demonstrate to own a status symbol like the last model by Chanel, is provided also by an object bought in the illegal market in Shanghai.

If we want to be a bit cynic, the level of satisfaction is even higher since the price payed is tens times lower.

I've always recognized the superior level of a shirt by Miu Miu, but gradually it's getting less and less visible to me.

If before i was really believing that big brands would use valuable finishes, innovative materials, now i can finally say that these concepts are almost obsolete.

Chinese became experts in copying whatever they have in front, centuries of philosophy thought them that the art of emulating helps us learning from

the master.

Surely there are some considerations to do talking about the production methods in China, internal distinctions and quality differences as well.

Many times it's been told that China doesn't respect workers' rights and it misappropriates intellectual properties, but i have to note that those brands which pride themselves with the made in france o made in italy labels use exactly the same production methods of chinese ones.

These brands rely on Prato district in Italy (Chinese monopoly) or de-localize the production in China.

Thus they transfer the know-how and train chinese personnel that will be then charged of illegal faking.

Probably the time to reformulate the Added Value concept has come, especially in this historical moment when everybody is questioning about the ethical nature of every single daily action.

China is catching up the west, it is trying to understand the current added value, but maybe it can jump this step and recreate a new one, trying to acknowledge the people behind the fabrication of these objects rather than the snobby salesmen in posh and fancy boutiques.

8 What is culture made of?

Meant to be made in China is a recognition for all those goods produced in China not just because of an economic advantage, but because it is a culture based action.

I designed a certification that awards all the product which enhance the aspiration and values of communities, their traditions and knowledge.

China is trying to change the projection of itself on the rest of the world, but the label “made in China” drags it down.

It is a multicolored and multifaceted country, with many different ethnic groups, all with their own beliefs and know-how; instead of exporting quantity it is important to start selling quality and to do so it is fundamental to dig into the history and the knowledge.

Meant to be made in China tries to define a series of requirements that a product should have in order to be culturally related to the country of manufacture.

Since the concept of Culture itself is huge and almost impossible to be defined with a sentence, also the certification is cross sectional. It touches different and varied topics, from the most tangible one to the most intangible ones.

8.1 Inenctions

I want a perfect world where the added value is given by people's work. I want a perfect worlds where the exportation of goods is the answer to the need of letting the rest of the world know our cultural background.

I want to recognize the value of a product by looking at it and understanding that hands, brains, and eyes have been working on it for hours.

I want that People with the most varied backgrounds have the chance to support the production of a good, not just by providing power force, but especially telling their stories, their lives and their beliefs.

Taking advantage of these countless traditions it is possible to make a better world, where globalization does not mean "flattening" and "levelness", but enrichment and differentiation.

I want the chance to adopt a model of economic - productive specialization where culture becomes the origin of the added value.

The country has to be the frame which gives signify to the production. The object produced has to be deeply rooted in people's culture.

In order to do so, it is important to understand the meaning of "culture" and the manifold ways of transmitting this incredibly difficult concept to other people.

8.2 There is Culture and culture

Culture is surely one of the most difficult concept to explain. It would be much easier to say what culture does not represent rather than the actual meaning of it.

The concept that I am confident with, is taken from Jon Hawkes, who expresses his idea in the book “the 4th pillar of sustainability. Culture’s essential role in public planning”:

- *Culture is the social production and transmission of identities, meanings, knowledge, beliefs, values, aspirations, memories, purposes, attitudes and understanding;*
- *Culture is the “way of life” of a particular set of humans: customs, faiths and conventions; codes of manners, dress, cuisine, language, arts, science, technology, religion and rituals; norms and regulations of behavior, traditions and institutions.*

This means that culture can be both the medium and the message, Culture enfolds every aspect of human intercourse: the family, the education, legal, political and transport systems, the mass media, work practices, welfare programs, leisure pursuit, religion, the built environment.

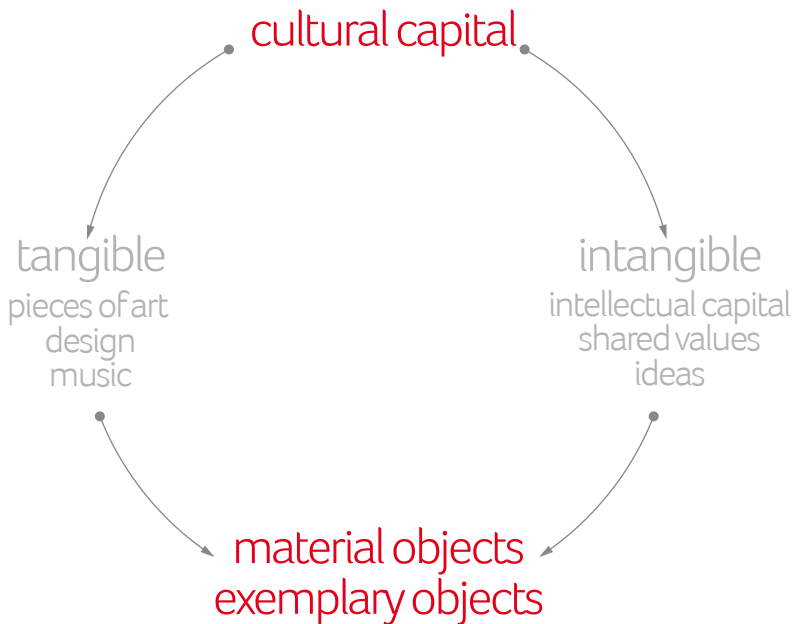
Culture is not the decoration added after a society has dealt with its basic needs. Culture IS the basic need - it is the bedrock of society.

Culture can be more intangible, this is the case of beliefs, habits and traditions, but can be rather tangible, for instance the art pieces. This second example is the means with which the culture is transmitted to other people, it is a language to communicate a concept.

The main distinction to do is between (C)ulture and (c)ulture: in the ma-

jority of the cases Culture with capital letter, refers to the output of Artists (professional makers of Cultural products). It includes neither the artistic practices of communities at large nor the activities commonly described as mass or popular culture, let alone any wider view of culture as the system of values informing society as a whole.

Again the artistic output is just the medium of a mass or popular culture.



8.3 Culture is an important need

The concept of culture comprehends the means through which communities express their values.

A sustainable society depends upon a sustainable culture. If a society's culture disintegrates, so will everything else.

People can be sick, hungry, and poor but still may have well-being if one feels an active part of an organism that is bigger than oneself. Bread alone is simply not enough.

A society cannot survive unless it is able to develop and maintain amongst its constituents, a shared expression of, and commitment to, a sense of meaning and purpose. Developing and maintaining this sense is cultural action.

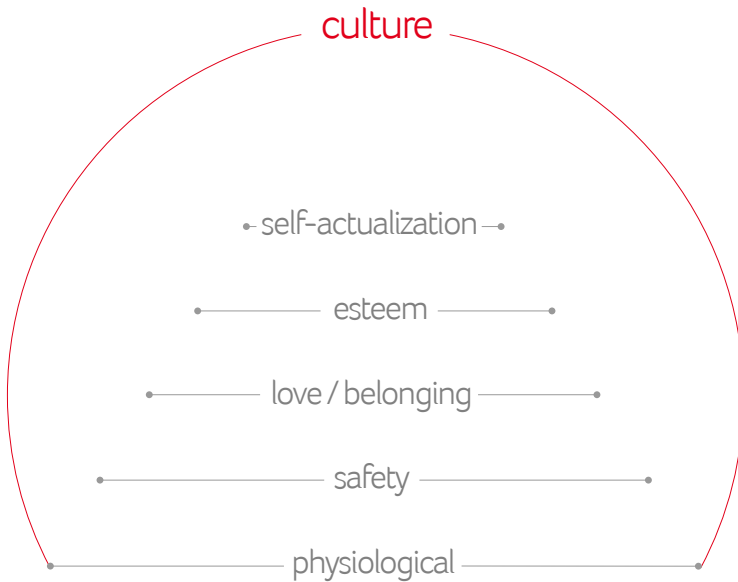
China is one of the best examples of cultural diversity in the meaning here explained.

More than fifty ethnic groups, all with different traditions, habits and most with different languages create an incredible cultural melting pot, where the differentiation may become a source of added value.

Difference is an elemental aspect of the human condition. And in nearly all situations, this is an asset to a vital society, not a threat.

Just as bio-diversity is an essential component of ecological sustainability, so is cultural diversity essential to social sustainability. Diverse values should not be respected just because we are tolerant people, but because we must

have a pool of diverse perspectives in order to survive, to adapt to changing conditions, to embrace the future.



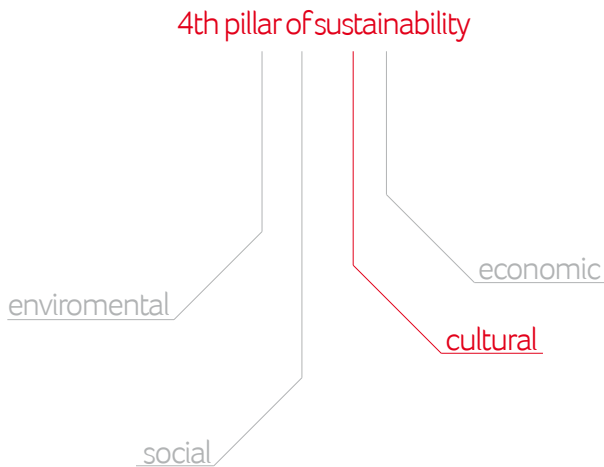
8.4 The fourth pillar of sustainability

These days, when people in business talk about sustainability, they mean environmental sustainability. Traditionally, the environment was an externality that was ignored. More and more, with the conversations of “carbon neutral,” people are starting to think about what it means to environmentally sustainable. At the same time, a company can be environmentally sound and completely destroy local economies and other aspects of culture through their moves.

The idea of “cultural sustainability” is about companies whose actions offset the consequences of their presence (or disappearance). For example, when large companies abandon cities that they’ve been in for years and where the entire city revolves around them, their move has a HUGE culturally destructive force. How do they offset this in a functional way? How does this get considered to be an externality that needs to be factored in? (It used to be through layoff benefits and pensions that kept going no matter what... this is no longer viewed as critical.) Large companies who come into a town and put out of business a variety of different local merchants have another kind of culturally destructive practices. When companies were smaller and local, there were pressures put upon them to be good local citizens. They invested in the towns where they were present and operated as key actors in creating culturally sustainable systems. It was normal for a company to

help out with a local school event because education made sense for the company because it meant better employees. As companies get bigger and bigger (and “globalized”), there’s less pressure to be invested in the culture. Even if there was, what culture should they invest in when they’re so big? Mostly, big companies give back to communities for PR purposes.

There are numerous points of pressure placed on companies right now to be environmentally sustainable, but this is not the only kind of sustainability that matters. That said, there are lessons to be learned. For a long time, the conversation tended to devolve into capitalism vs. environmental sustainability. More and more, folks are saying BOTH and finding ways to make that work. How do we do this with cultural sustainability? What pressure points need to be put into place where culture is evaluated as an externality in the models that economists draw up? 1



1. Danah Boyd, 2008

8.5 Cultural identity

Culture refers to the habits, practices, languages, values and world views that define social groups such as those based on nationality, ethnicity, region or common interests. Cultural identity is important for people's sense of self and how they relate to others. A strong cultural identity can contribute to people's overall wellbeing.

Cultural identity based on ethnicity is not necessarily exclusive, people may identify themselves as Chinese in some circumstances and as part of a particular culture, in other circumstances.

They may also identify with more than one culture. The desired outcomes recognise it is important for people to feel a sense of national identity and also to be able to belong to particular social or ethnic groups.

Cultural identity is an important contributor to people's wellbeing. Identifying with a particular culture makes people feel they belong and gives them a sense of security. It also provides access to social networks, which provide support and shared values and aspirations. Social networks can help to break down barriers and build a sense of trust between people. However, strong cultural identity expressed in the wrong way can contribute to barriers between groups. An established cultural identity has also been linked

with positive outcomes in areas such as health and education.²

A strong national culture or identity, and strength in creative endeavours, can be a source of economic strength and higher material standards of living.

Conversely, members of minority cultures can feel excluded from society if others obstruct, or are intolerant of, their cultural practices.

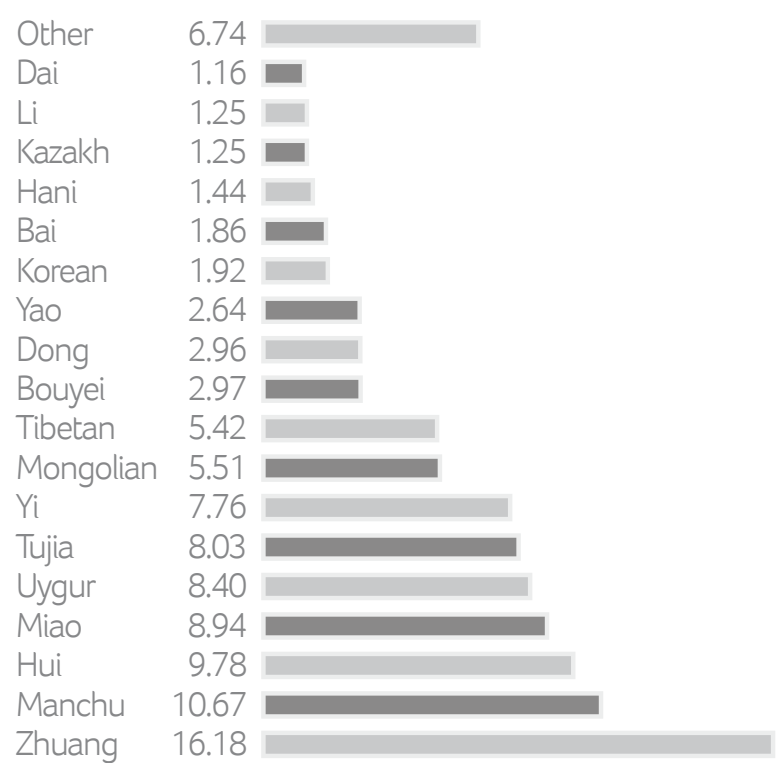
There is an increasing awareness that more and more people are feeling disengaged from their society, this not a good situation for the society as a whole nor for those who feel left out. Sometimes in a society devoted to specialisation that almost all important decisions are delegated to experts, many matters of immediate and crucial concern to citizens are so beyond their influence that even thinking about them guarantees frustration. A sense of powerlessness breeds apathy and resentment.

“the twentieth century has transformed the entire planet from a finite world of certainties to an infinite world of questioning and doubt. So if ever there was a need to stimulate creative imagination and initiative in the part of individuals, communities and whole societies the time is now. The notion of creativity can no longer be restricted to the arts. It must be applied across the full spectrum of human problem-solving”³

2. Durie et al (2002); Durie (1999).

3. World Commission on Culture and Development, *Our creative Diversity* (1995) Paris, UNESCO

Beyond the Han



Given that around 91 percent of its people, China might seem an homogeneous country. Yet in a population of 1.3 billion, even China’s minorities are sizable - and growing. Its 55 non Han ethnic groups, largely exempt from China’s One Child Policy, add up to more than one hundred million citizens, on par with the population of Mexico.

8.5.1 Just like the third Italy

Italy is one of the best example of how the culture (with the meaning shared in this thesis) influenced the production of goods, transforming what in the north of Europe was the first example of massive industrial production, into a culture based action.

Alfred Marshall says: “when an industry has thus chosen a locality for itself, it is likely to stay there long: so great are the advantages which people following the same skilled trade get from near neighborhood to one another. The mysteries of the trade become no mysteries; but are as it were in the air, and children learn many of them unconsciously. Good work is rightly appreciated, inventions and improved machinery, in processes and the general organization of the business have their merits promptly discussed: if one starts a new idea, it is taken up by others and combined with suggestions of their own; and thus it becomes the source of further new ideas. And presently subsidiary trades grow up in the neighborhood, supplying it with implements and materials, organizing its traffic, and in many ways conducing to the economy of its material.”⁴

Italian district enclosed these characteristics into systems able to resist to recessive crisis at the end of the 70s and beginning of 80s.

Creative people did not find an adequate industrial settlement in Italy able to provide a mass production so they decided for the punctual specialization. Intensive collaborations between artisans and creatives gave birth to a specific and unique production of high quality goods.

Those goods were the result of sectorial knowledge that came from ancient traditions. Artisans allowed the production of innovative products thanks

4. A. Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, 1920, p. 225.

to the strictly collaborative work. The constant discourse between technicians and designers is the main responsible of what created the “made in Italy” still known allover the world.

Like in Italy, China owns an enormous pool of know-hows as the result of thousands of years of history. It is incredibly important to bring them back to the surface and use them.

The choice of the place of production will be driven by the will to find the best place where people work a specific material, or use a determined know-how.

8.6 Cultural District

Culture is becoming always more and more important and present in the new processes of economic value creation.

But how to evaluate the real economies linked to culture? this is the most difficult task due to its immaterial nature (but not imaginary).

Talking about production of goods, it seems to be closely related to materiality instead of immateriality, but we have to point out that something is missing.

Something invisible not referable to the physical nature of the product itself. The capital of knowledge, competencies, experience that make it a better product.

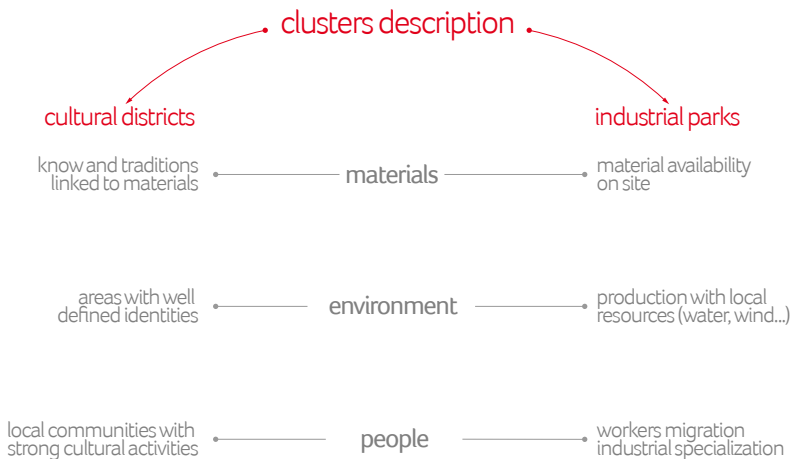
The added value is produced by the human capital, by the enthusiastic, and competent expert producer who adds value.

The auto analytical process is a slow but inexorable improvement of the offer's quality with the slow growth of competences by the request . For instance in Italy, customers matured competences in recognizing the quality of wine and the request grew exponentially, but we will never know if they have been "educated" by the wine producers through experimentation or it has been a natural process. Probably the processes happened together, they are synergic.

So the simultaneous growth of request and offer brings into life a new market. The market we have to look at when aiming to a cultural market development.

If we don't recreate the basis for the accumulation of immaterial resources (human capital) which starts the synergic interaction between offer and request, nothing will be able to give an acceptable result.

The economic sense of culture lies on his catalyzing role for new production practices, more and more linked to an immaterial dimension of the added value.



8.7 An important transition

The industrial district is a local reality characterized by the presence of an integrated community and a main industry. This has to be formed by an elevated number of little independent enterprises, specialized in different phases of the same productive process.⁵

The presence of a group of small enterprises on a territory is not sufficient to create a district. the characterizing elements are the interdependency between the stakeholders, and the industrial atmosphere.

So Marshal before and Becattini after, define the industrial district as a concentration of little enterprises, geographically localized, which cooperate with each other efficiently. Knowledge, values, people and institutions characterize the society and the territory in which the district is placed.

According the classic concept of district, “culture” is very important, it provides the tacit knowledge, conventions and behavioral models at the base of the district logic, but according the Anglo-Saxon meaning, the cultural districts are those where it’s noticeable a concentration of activities and places for art and performing art.

On the contrary, the model by Santagata (2002 a,b, 2003) keeps in mind the

5. Giacomo Becattini. 1990. “The Marshallian District as a Socioeconomic Notion.”

immaterial conditions which are behind the development of a district.

The development of a cultural district is the answer to a request of making sustainable the growth of an area. Producing goods based on existent knowledge and local traditions, making the production competitive thank to the quality of the goods. culture-based products are the result of an high specialization, are closely linked to a place,a community and its traditions.

All these elements come together in the cultural capital, which can be defined as: “a benefit that goes around and produces cultural values added to the economic content owned by the product itself” (Throsby, 2000). The cultural capital can be intangible, disguised as art piece or design, or tangible, disguised as intellectual capital, ideas, shared values. Both give birth to goods and services with a cultural and economic value.

Cultural districts are well defined by the goods produced, based on creativity and intellectual production, these act as creators of competitive advantage. These goods are idiosyncratic, because many factors are needed in order to be produced and created. Such as knowledge transmission and personal experience.

Material Culture •————→ System of communication

Objetc •————→ Sign

(Sign = Signifier + signified)

Every sign •————→ ?————→ Material Cuture

The semiotic approach considers the material culture as a system of communication and the object as a sign made of a signifier (the form which the sign takes) and a signified (the concept it represents)¹, but How can we define and understand if this sign really represents the material culture?

¹ La cultura materiale By Jean-Pierre Warnier

9 How to recognize the objects

The concept of Material Culture appeared in the Human sciences, and particularly in the history, after the creation of Anthropology and archeology. It takes the distances from the concept of culture putting the attention on the symbolic aspects of the producing activities of human beings, on products and tools and on different kind of techniques. Basically on the concrete objects of societies' lives.

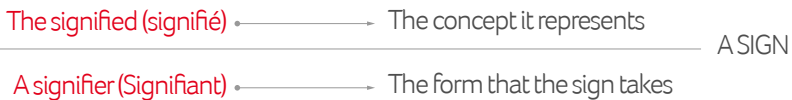
The study of Material culture prefers the masses rather than individualities and elite; it takes care of infrastructures instead of superstructures. Also human beings are part of material culture; the body is a semiotic transduction and it is equally important for composing the general framework of a culture or a society. At the same way wrecks and coins define a city, industries and commerce. Anyway the material objects carry other signs, linked to arts, law, and religion. Just by considering this complex we can identify the state of a society, its progress and its evolution seen through the used tools.

Material culture tries to bridge the human imagination and his creativity and takes into consideration three fundamental components: The space, the time and the sociality of an object. The study of material culture belongs to the historic research.

9.1 Semiotic and Product design

The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure is one of the founders of Semiotics "which studies the role of signs as part of social life".¹

Umberto Eco states "semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign". Semiotics therefore studies not only "signs" in everyday speech such as traffic signs, symbols or pictures but everything, which "stands for" something else. This also includes our material culture such as buildings, furniture and products. The most common object for semiotic analyses is a "text". A "text" usually refers to a recorded message, so that it is physically independent of its sender or receiver. It could be a book, a picture, TV-program, film or a product. A text is an assemblage of signs (such as words, images, sounds, gestures) constructed and interpreted with reference to the conventions of a particular genre and medium of communication. The sign is the central term in semiotics. Saussure defined a sign as being composed of:



1. Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, London: Fontana/Collins (1916/1983)

A sign must have both a signifier and a signified; you cannot have a meaningless signifier/form or a meaningless signified/concept. The two always go together, they are like the two sides of a coin and Saussure introduced a model where they are represented on each side of a line.

Taking an example, the word "table" is the signifier and it represents the concept table. It doesn't necessarily refer to a real table, but a general concept of a table. A sign on a shop door that reads OPEN signifies that the shop is open.

Subsequent semioticians have criticised Saussure for neglecting the real world and have reclaimed the materiality of the signifier. This is also the approach that I choose to have. The Signifier is the physical form of the object, the aesthetics. This is what we see, touch, smell and experience.

The signified is the content, whatever meaning we make out of what we meet and experience. A later semiotic model by Charles Pierce includes the real object "the table" and is turned into a triangle. Louis Hjelmslev [8] has used the terms content and expression to refer to the two concepts and has addressed the complex relation between form and content in the sign itself.

From a design perspective the "real thing" is in fact the central issue.

Therefore the signifier, the form is at the centre of our interest. If the word car signifies the concept car, what does the real car signifies? Well, a car signifies a car doesn't it? Well not quite, though with objects it is very easy to let the signifier and signified melt into one. The world around of us of products and buildings becomes naturalised; it seems to be a natural, unquestionable status quo and not a constructed piece of human artefact. We often fail to realise that the most obvious and self-evident around us, the real world – isn't that self-evident after all.

Psychoanalytic theory also contributed to the revaluation of the signifier.

The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan² sought to highlight the primacy of the signifier in the psyche by rewriting Saussure's model. He put the Signifier on the top represented by a big S and the signified below the bar represented by a small s.

Lacan wanted to show how the signified inevitably "slips beneath the signifier and refuses definition". To Lacan, expressions like anger, happiness etc. were signifiers of psychological events. Negative feelings without expressions turned into anxiety.

Rewriting the Saussurean model for a design perspective would look like this:

S - signifier, the expression, the FORM, the aesthetics, Objective	•————→	outer world
<hr/>		
s - signified, the coherent, the CONCEPT, what it stands for, Subjective	•————→	inner world

The signifier is the physical form of an object; what we see, touch and smell in the objective and shared reality. The signified is the content, the meaning of the object; what we experience, think and feel when we interact with the artefact.

2. Lacan, *Ecrits*, London: Routledge (1977)

9.1.1 Denotation and Connotation

Denotation and Connotation are two basic concepts in semiotics that are very useful.

Denotation refers to the literal, actual meaning of a sign – what the product is, i.e. a chair, a telephone, a book etc. To Denotation I also add the obvious function of an object: How to handle it. You sit on the chair, you use the telephone for making phone calls etc.

This sound straightforward enough but in a world of technological and product development, recognizing what it is and how to handle it can be very difficult. This is also the domain where most product semiotics dwells. Products should be unambiguous and easy to use, clearly communicating their function. Preferably you should not need a manual to use simple product or a computer programs. You should be able to recognise and use a simple product like a parkingpost without problems. Cognitive scientists such as Donald Norman and numerous designers have helped to develop this field during the last decade. Designing self-evident products are today a question of letting the designers be part of the productions cycle from an early start. The knowledge is there, the question is of how to bring it in.

Connotation is how you do it, the choice of words or media.

Denotation and Connotation are often described as different levels of meaning. Barthes introduces the idea of different orders of signification. The first order of signification is that of denotation, this is the sign consisting of signifier and signified.

Connotation is the second order of signification, which uses the denotative sign as its signifier and attach to it an additional signified.

In reality it is difficult to separate the two levels, Barthes himself later gave priority to the connotative level and notes that it is no longer easy to separate the ideological from the literal. Fiske warns, “It is often easy to read connotative values in denotative facts”³

Denotation and connotation combines into the third order of signification, which Barthes calls Myth. For Barthes myths were the dominant ideologies of our time.

“...Myth has in fact double functions: it points out and it notifies, it makes us understand something and it imposes it on us...It transforms history into nature” writes Barthes in a famous example from *Mythologies*.

Signs and codes are generated by myths and in turn serve to maintain them.

Myths can be seen as extended metaphors. Like metaphors, myths help us to make sense of our experience within a culture.⁴ For Barthes, myths serve the ideological function of naturalisation. Their function is to make dominant historical and cultural values; attitudes and beliefs seem entirely “natural”, “normal”, obvious and commonsense – and thus objective and true reflections of “the way things are”. Contemporary sociologists argue that social groups tend to regard as “natural” whatever confers privilege and power upon themselves.⁵

“Unlike the more or less ephemeral media, design has the capacity to cast myths into enduring, solid and tangible form, so that they seem to be reality itself.” Writes Adrian Forty.⁶ Returning to two chairs, we can try to reveal what Myths or dominant values they reflect.

3. Fiske, *Introduction to communication studies*, London: Routledge(1982)

4. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors we live by*, University of Chicago press (1980)

5. Chandler, *Semiotics – the basics*, Routledge (2001). See also the extended netversion at www.aber.ac.uk/media/Dokuments/S4B

6. Forty, *Objects of desire*, London: Thames & Hudson, (1986)

The Bruno Mattson chair was first designed in 1934. It is comfortable, modern, natural and does in every way embody the modernistic ideas of honesty in form, function and material. The chair follows the human body in a design that is both elegant and functional.

It has become a design icon for its time and reflects the new dreams of Folkhemmet, the Swedish social democratic vision of a “peoples home” that became closely allied to modernism or “Funktionalism” as it was called in Sweden. A modern political idea that were more “humanistic” and “supportive” to the “body” of the Swedish people then i.e. the German or Russians ideas and also easier to accept, less imposive and authoritarian.

The other chair by Jonas Bohlin from 1987 sends a totally different message. Here the modernistic aesthetic has become empty signifiers that can be used for provocation and a formal experiment. The chair is clearly not comfortable and it certainly not humanistic. It was made in a time when the Swedish social democratic visions where falling apart and it became obvoius that “The peoples home” was not for everybody. Jonas Bohlin’s chair in steel and concrete reflect the rift in the new Sweden were some people get beaten and other spend fortunes on “designer chairs”.

9.1.2 Prototype e Stereotype

The concepts of Stereotype and Prototype are fundamental in order to understand whether an object is really culturally sustainable in different topics.

Stereotype is something conforming to a fixed or general pattern; esp: standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment.

Prototype is an original type, real or fictional character, which appears real (e.g., a movie character, or a book character), and which plays a critical role in making an impression thus creating a generalized image.

The psychological influence of both stereotypes and prototypes results in the formation of a distorted, generalized cultural image.

Talking about denotativeness and connotativeness for instance it is important to understand the differences between these two concepts.

An object may be extremely connotative or denotative but as a result of a stereotyping process. .

9.2 The main influence

Country of Origin image, Country of Manufacture image and Brand awareness have a huge influence on consumer purchasing intention, but what is the difference exactly?

Initially, the notion of the Country of Origin (CoO) was perceived as analogous to the made in country¹ that is basically the Country of Manufacture (CoM).

In the label there was the name of the CoM which is where the final assembly of the product was completed, and identified as synonymous with the CoO.

Other concept gradually emerged in CoO literature, like the Country of Design (CoD), this refers to the country within which the product was designed and developed. Moreover, global companies utilize brand names to suggest a specific origin (Country of Brand - CoB).

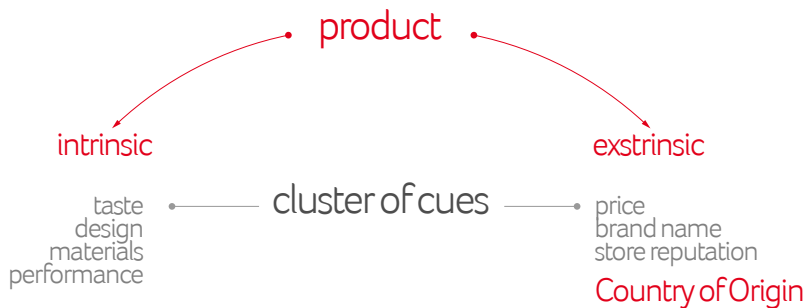
Finally the CoO is commonly considered as the country that consumer typically associate with a product or brand, regardless of where it was manufactured.

According to Bilkey and Nes (1982), one of the most popular approaches towards the use of CoO-cues is the cognitive approach; the basic assumption is that a product can be considered as a cluster of cues. Usually, a distinction is made between product intrinsic cues such as taste, design, material, performance, etc. and product extrinsic cues such as price, brand name, store reputation, war-

1. Dichter, 1962; Nebenzahl et al., 1997

ranty and country of origin. In particular CoO is defined as some aspect of the product that is distinct from its physical characteristics, but that is nevertheless identified with the product²

A common thread can be found between the CoO, the CoD, and the CoM. The CoO impacts consumer perceptions, and behaviors through the image of the product's country of origin. The image is the representation, reputation, or the stereotype of a specific country which consumers associate with the products³.



Saeed (1994) points out, that country-of-origin (COO or CO) means the country that a manufacturer's product or brand is associated with traditionally this country is called the Home-Country. For some brands, country-of-origin belongs to a given and definite country, such as IBM belongs to the United States and SONY is a Japanese brand, which can be called country-of-origin of these brands.

Hong & Wyer (1989) report that when customers hear any news or find any clues about country-of-origin, such as price or brand, the country-of-origin effect in the consumer recognition process should be observed from two sides. One is

2. Erickson et al., 1984, p.694

3. Nagashima, 1970, 1977

the halo effect; the other is the summary construct effect. When the consumer is not familiar with a specific country's product, then the country image would cause a halo effect, this would not only directly affect the consumer's trust in the product, it would indirectly affect the consumer's overall evaluation of the product also (Erickson et al., 1984 Johansson et al., 1985). However, when the consumer is very familiar with a specific country's product, then consumer he/she refers product associated information to the country and cause summary construct effect, this effect would indirectly affect his/her attitude towards this brand (Han, 1989).

Han & Terpstra (1988) referring Nagashima's (1970) research, refine 4 factors from 14 measured items through factor analysis. The four factors are advanced technology, prestige, workmanship and economy. Furthermore, they plus subjective concern serviceability and overall evaluation as the measure dimension of country image. Agarwal & Sikri (1996) review many literature, they summarize 24 items then narrow to 14 items to measure the country image. They adapt the factor analysis to refine 3 factors at last, which are industry technology, prestige and price as the measure dimension of the country image. According to Martin & Eroglu (1993), general tools and methods used for the country image measurement, can only measure the product image of a specific country but not the country image

The brand is a variable that works as a summary in formulating purchase intentions⁴. Sometimes brand names surrogate CoO because of the association of brand names with specific countries; in fact consumers often infer the CoO from brand name, this could effect the brand equity by generating secondary associations for the brand and even a foreign-sounding name is able to affect the brand equity.

4. Erickson et al., 1984, p.694

When customers have insufficient information to assess a product or service, brand names become a proxy to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of the offering itself. However, positive brand images can be reduced if the product is designed or assembled in a country with a negative CoO image (Johansson and Nebenzahl, 1986). Furthermore according to Haubl (1997) purchase intentions of luxury products are likely to be influenced both by brand and CoO. Customers consider both the brand attributes and the place of manufacture or place of assembly in their purchase decisions (Tse and Gorn, 1993; Ahmed and d'Astous, 1996). Many important brands with good reputations are linked to countries with high CoO images. Moreover, a very strong brand could decrease the CoO relevance (Heslop and Papadopoulos, 1993). "The finding revealed that the country of manufacturer information does not produce a significant effect on the evaluation of branded products when this information is congruent with the brand origin. However, when the product is manufactured in a country with a weaker image than the country of the brand origin, country of manufacturer information produces a significant negative effect on product evaluation, and the effect tends to be more devastating for low equity than high equity brands" (Koubaa, 2008). Some researchers (Mohd Yasin et al., 2007) have investigated the relationships between country-of-origin image and brand equity for electrical appliances, and they discovered that CoO has a significant impact on brand dimensions and specifically on brand loyalty. Haubl and Helrod (1999) noted that perceptions of a product are more favourable when coherence between brand and country of production is recognised. Research carried out by Busacca et al. (2006) likewise points out that the effect of the interaction between brand image and country of origin image varies in direction and intensity depending on the perceptual consonance of these two aspects. Since this perceived place of origin is little short of a demographic variable

and, furthermore, since it contributes to shaping the brand personality (Thakor and Kholi, 1996), it is vital for brand and country of origin to display intrinsic coherence.

Analysis of CoO and brand interactions is of particular importance for global brands, which are often represented by products with different CoD and CoM; it thus becomes important to explore whether and to what extent customers consider the brand name as a completely autonomous factor or as a factor exerting a certain influence, or even as an estimator of the CoO. According to Pecotich and Ward (2007), a brand gradually takes on the function of a summarizing construct in the eyes of the customer, as the latter grows increasingly familiar with the brand in question; furthermore, the greater the familiarity, the less the customer will be inclined to consider other extrinsic information such as the price or the CoO. Again according to the above cited authors, a familiar brand is actually able to increase the perception CoO of the country with which the brand is associated, and even to neutralize the negative effect often linked to developing countries.

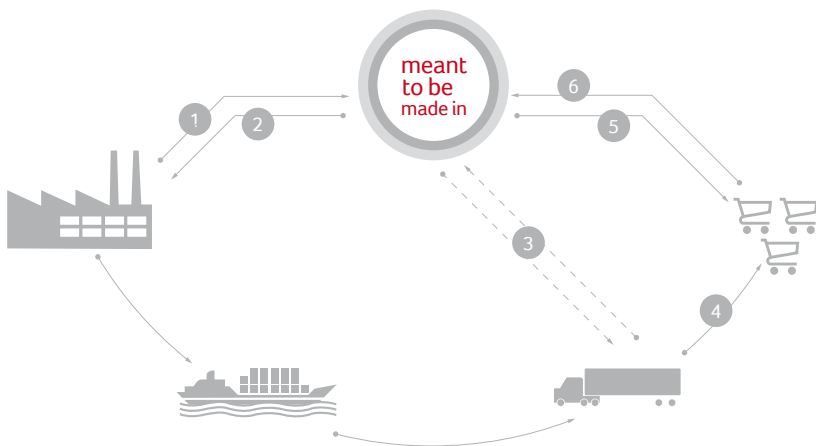
Finally Pappu et al. (2006), stating that country of origin is an important variable which can affect the equity of a brand, assert that marketing managers operating in an international context must identify the sources of brand equity, and understand the importance of incorporating country of origin into their brand equity measurement.

9.2.1 Traceability

In order to ensure a perfect transparency of the production it is fundamental to provide a service of traceability of the products.

The main issue is the difficulty to control all the stages of the production, especially in those cases where the companies use contract factories all over the world.

The traceability will be useful for both the final customer and the seller, and everybody will be asked to collaborate to keep updated the chain of custody.



- 1. The Sales Announcement:** the producer makes a Sales Announcement in the “meant to be made in” Traceability System.
- 2. The serial number:** When this announcement is approved, he will get a unique serial number for the contract. This number is of key importance for traceability. The producer sends the unique number to the first buyer, who must forward them to the final buyer.
- 3. Verify:** A trader can verify the certification by entering the unique number.
- 4. Split Announcement:** When a trader splits a contract and sells it to multiple buyers, he makes a Split Announcement in the Traceability System. The Traceability System will now generate a new unique number for each volume sold of the container. This way split containers also remain traceable.
- 5. Match:** The seller confirms the arrival of the product in the Traceability System by entering the unique number. The roaster now sees who has originally produced it. If the data on the screen match with the contract details, he is guaranteed to have received a certified product.
- 6. Sales Record:** The seller can download a Sales Record stating the origin of its purchases. With this sales record the seller has a proof of buying responsible produced items.

Other organizations in the chain can also get Chain of Custody certified if they want or on the request of their buyers. This certification recognizes their good traceability practices.

9.3 People at the basis of culture

At the basis of cultural development and production of goods there is surely the wellbeing of workers.

In order to assure the perfect balance and a perfect knowledge of the matter I took as a reference the International Labor Organization, that relieves the code of conduct for all the factories in order to assure workers' wellbeing.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is devoted to advancing opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Its main aims are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue in handling work-related issues.

In promoting social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights, the organization continues to pursue its founding mission that labour peace is essential to prosperity. Today, the ILO helps advance the creation of decent jobs and the kinds of economic and working conditions that give working people and business people a stake in lasting peace, prosperity and progress.

9.3.1 Mission and Objectives

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The ILO's diverse tasks are grouped under four strategic objectives:

- Promote and realize standards and fundamental principles and rights at work
- Create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income
- Enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all
- Strengthen tripartism and social dialogue

The Companies willing to get “meant to be made in” certification have to follow all the ILO conventions (appendix?)

10 High potential

Are there brands with the qualities needed to ask for the certification? It's not easy to find them, because most of them are not aware of it and don't make anything to transmit their values in the right direction.

It has been fundamental to make a research on products manufactured in China in order to find the perfect match for my thesis, and in this section two brands that will show respectively the right behavior and the wrong behavior will be presented.

The examples shown in this research do not present the same narrative approach. I chose to describe and underline the information useful to demonstrate my approach and the relationship with "meant to be made in China".

10.1 Feiyue

The master's shoe

Originating in Shanghai, the Feiyue sneaker first appeared in the 1920s. This small shoe made of light material, that has guided the paths of all social classes in China, has crossed continents, arriving in Europe in 2006, where it was picked up by a team of French enthusiasts, fascinated by sneakers and urban culture.

Losing nothing of its vintage and authentic charm, Feiyue has undergone a series of transformations. With a gradual evolution of practices, blending in French and international influences, the brand is now set to conquer the walkways of Western cities.

Considerable work has been conducted on improving quality standards: with a complete revision of the original form and more carefully selected materials, the resulting shoe combines aesthetics with durability. With these modifications complete, the very first collection was launched in France in February 2006. Since then, Feiyue has seen many different varieties and is constantly changing - its name in Chinese, pronounced *Fei-ué*, means *Flying Forward...* Innovative models are thus constantly appearing, sporting new colors and new materials.¹

http://www.feiyue-shoes.com/pages_uk/historique.cfm

10.1.1 Apparent lack of culture

Timeless

Niche

Comfortable

Independent music

Attention for emerging artists

Young

Dressy

Colette

Milano 10 Corso Como

Dover street Market

10.1.2 Roots and history

These shoes were born in Shanghai in the 20s, but only in the 30s they became the official shoes worn by Kung Fu masters

In 2005 Patrice Bastian, who used to be an architect in Paris and a Deejay in New York, wanted to start a new career as entrepreneur. He then found these shoes and decided to give them a second chance and become one of the most famous shoes in France.

He gets in contact with the factory and redesigns everything in order to reach the standards requested by Europe.

10.1.3 Feyiue - meant to be made in China

- **Industry:** The factory it has not been implanted from zero, the production is made in an already existing place that has been implemented in order to reach the European standards of safety.
- **Production:** Local wisdom and know how are partially used for the production. Few training courses have been made in order to reach the safety standards, but the factory already presented a high knowledge about specific techniques (vulcanization of the plastic)
- **CoO & CoM alignment:** The Country of Origin and the Country of Manufactured are aligned in customer's perception. The place of manufacture is not disguised with sectarian advertisement
- **People:** International labor standards are respected, workers are motivated and taken in consideration.
- **Communities:** the shoes reflect the cultural identity of the place of manufacture, it is highly related with tan historical moment and with an incredibly important figure of Chinese traditions.
- **Connotativeness:** The object itself is international, but the way the shoes is made recalls directly the country of Origin. The method of representation is not stereotyped.

10.2 Chinese new year

Every year in China the Chinese New Year starts with the New Moon on the first day of the new year and ends on the full moon 15 days later. The 15th day of the new year is called the Lantern Festival, which is celebrated at night with lantern displays and children carrying lanterns in a parade.

It is the most traditional of the festivities in China and it is followed with enthusiasm and happiness by almost the whole population.

Chinese brands challenge each other with celebratory products and in the last years also companies with an historical western identity understood the incredible economic advantage of this Country, thanks to its numbers and consumerist approach.

Nike comes out every Chinese new year with a series of new thematic products for the celebration of this festivity.

Nike Chinese Zodiac New Year series started back to 2002 with the Air Force 1, celebrating the year of the horse. The Year of the Tiger Classic Cortez is the 9th design and the first Cortez shoe adopted in the series.

Here following a series of product representing the Chinese new year.



Year of the tiger, the Nike designers Instead of using the popular yellow stripe print, they used white tiger to reflect its image of power and prestige in Chinese traditional culture.



Nike Year of the Rat, present various influences from the “rat”, a combination of three class Nike running models There are two colorways as mentioned, a grey and a white colorway.

10.2.1 Nike - meant NOT to be made in China

- **Production:** Local wisdom and know how are not used for the production. Massive training courses are delivered to the contract factories in order to assure the best production all over the world with the same methods
- **CoO & CoM alignment:** The brand is totally linked to the West, even though the shoes might present Chinese decorations they are not referable to China as cultural identity.
- **People:** Nike has been charged of exploiting its workers many times, it was inserted in the list of the worst sweatshops in the world.
- **Communities:** these shoes are not reflecting any particular identity of the Country of Manufacture, they could be made in China or in any other place in the world.
- **Connotativeness:** The object is treated in a stereotypical way. The only thing that refers the shoes to China are the decorations changing according to the holiday.

11 Opposites

The graph is a visual representation of the characteristics that turn a product or a brand into “meant to be made in”.

The categories are 8 and are basically the summary of the whole research shown in this thesis and are presented as opposites fromt the most tangible to the most intangible.

The graph may be used either as a self evaluation tool for all those factories which want to start a culturally sustainable production, or for the companies already committed and willing to be recognized for their efforts.

100% **present**

the producing factory
was historically
present in the area
and is still working full
speed

50% **present**

the factory was
present in the area but
the production has
been implem
ented on purpose

Industry

50% **implanted**

the factory has ben set
up on purpose by the
company using
exhisting resources

100% **implanted**

a brand new factory
has been set up out of
nothing on purpose
by the MNE

100% on site

materials and resources
used for production are
100% found on site,
and typical of CoO
culture

50% on site

materials used are
partially found on site
and partially coherent
with CoO culture

resources

50% imported

materials and
resources used for
production are
partially imported
from abroad

100% imported

materials and resources
used for production are
100% imported from
abroad and foreign to
CoO culture

100% **local wisdom**

the production is closely
linked to workers'
know-how and traditions

50% **local wisdom**

the production is linked to
workers' know-how but
implemented with short
training programs



50% **foreign wisdom**

workers get training
programs and workshops
in order to teach and clarify
the know-how

100% **foreign wisdom**

the requested know-how is
totally foreign to workers and
taught on purpose



100% **empowerment**

rights of workers respected,
they are fully empowered and
loaded with responsibility

50% **empowerment**

workers rights are respected,
workers' ideas are listened and
taken into consideration



50% **responsability deprivation**

workers are simple labour; the environment
is not motivating

100% **responsability deprivation**

the factory is a sweatshop.

100% cultural enrichment

the object is referred to CoO's cultural identity, it totally reflects workers and CoO's beliefs, and habits

50% cultural enrichment

The object is part of CoO's cultural identity, it partially reflects workers and people's beliefs, and habits



50% cultural impoverishment

the object is not referred to CoO's cultural identity, it doesn't reflect workers and people's beliefs and habits

100% cultural impoverishment

the object is foreign to the CoO, it is totally opposite and against workers and people's beliefs and habits

100% **prototype**

the object best meets the
representative characteristics
of the category.
the way it is done immediately
reminds the CoO

50% **prototype**

at a second glance the CoO
is visible thanks to particulars
of the objects.
the shape and the
appearance of the object are
linked to CoO



connotative

50% **stereotype**

the CoO is not understand-
able by looking at the object.
The particulars referred to the
CoO are disguised or
stereotyped.

100% **stereotype**

it's not possible to refer the
object to any Country by
looking at it.
The way it is done doesn't
match with the CoO or it is
extremely stereotyped

100% **prototype**

the object is part of CoO's culture, it's never been made in any other place.
It's not a matter of shape, the function itself is particular of the place of Origin

50% **prototype**

the object is part of CoO's culture even if it's been exported abroad. the origins are definitely reductible to CoO.



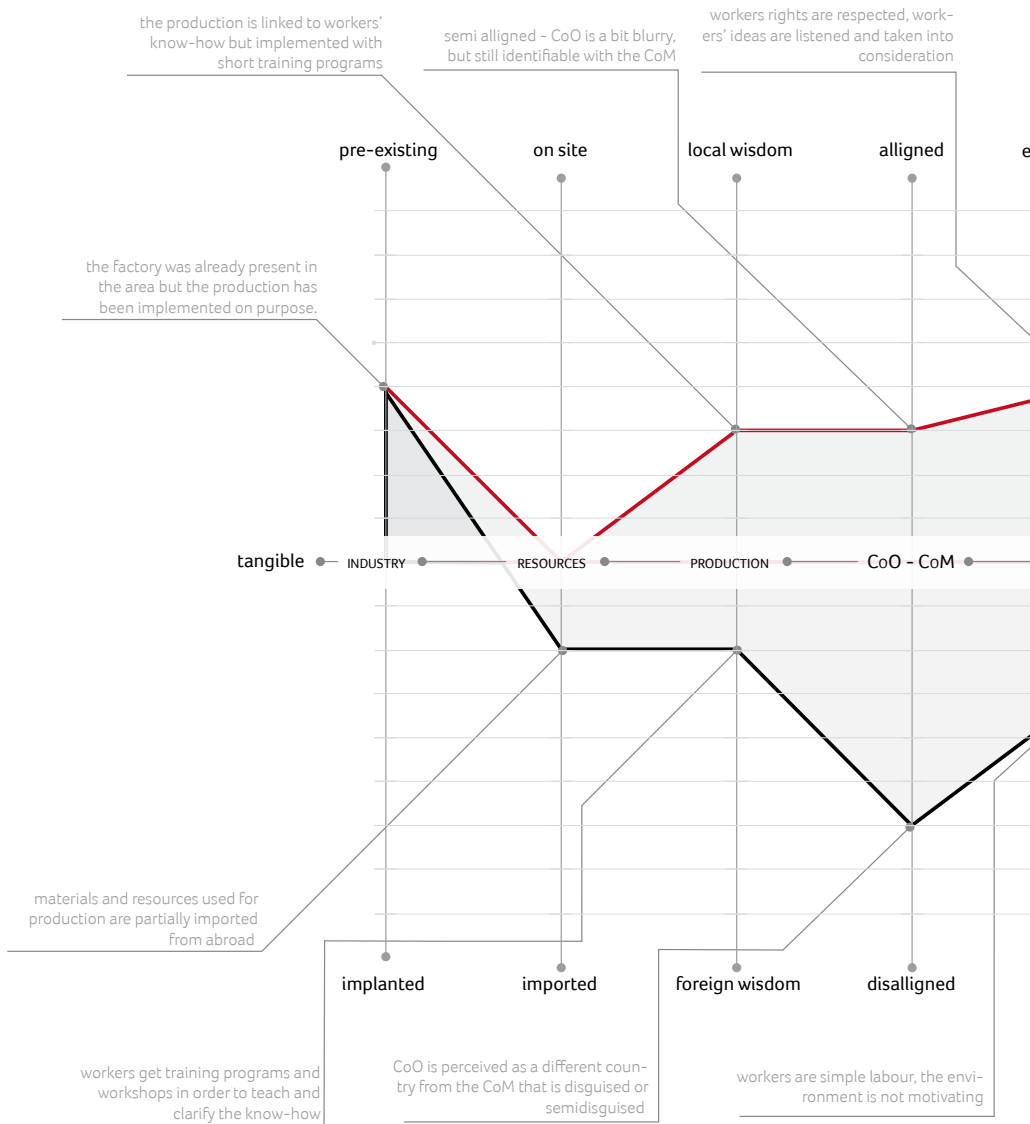
denotative

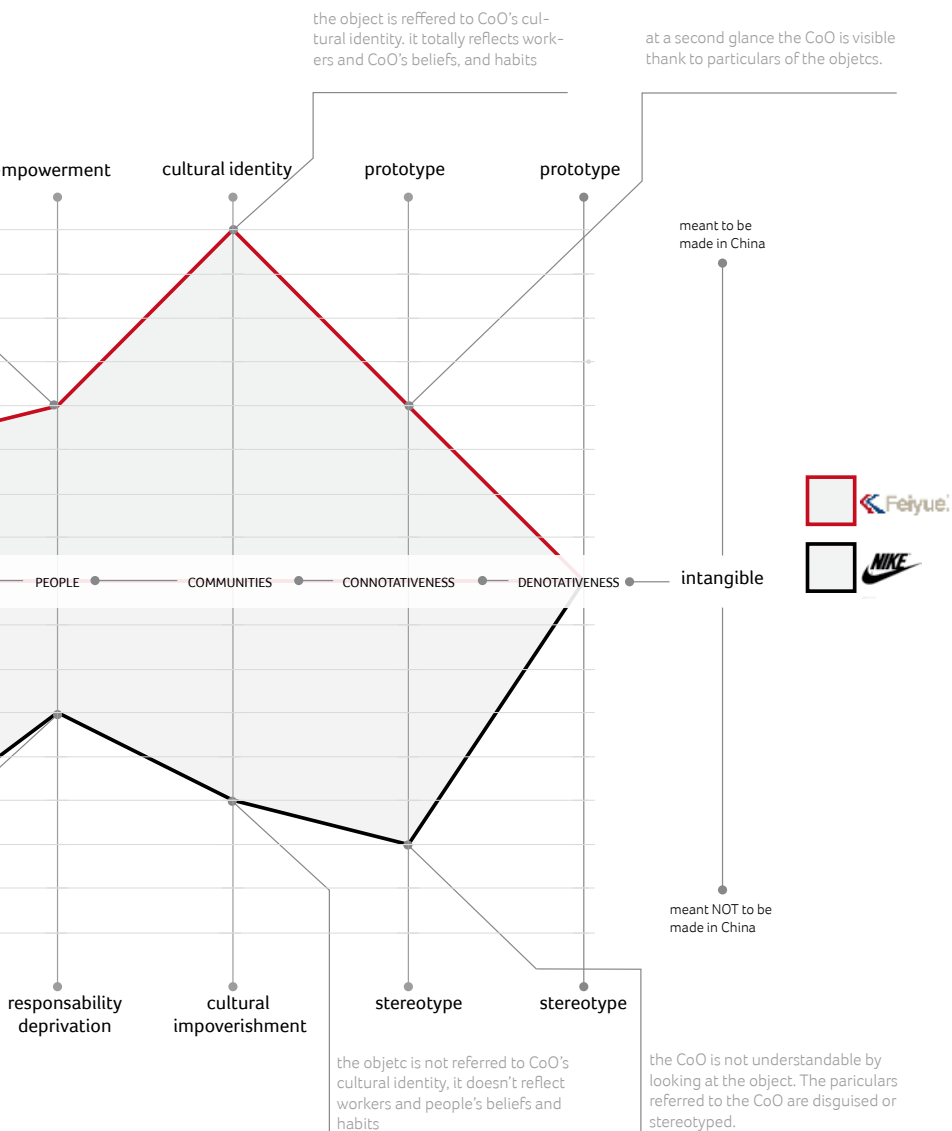
50% **stereotype**

the object is part of other cultures, even if recognizable, it is part of contemporary culture, imported culture

100% **stereotype**

the object it's never been in CoO, it's part of another culture and it doesn't match with the CoO





12 Visual Brief

The main characteristic of the certification is the adaptability to any country willing to start a cultural sustainable production and, consequently transmit it to the customers.

Thus “meant to be made in China” might become “meant to be made in India” or in Turkey or in Vietnam.

No matter the place of Manufacture, the aim of this project is to find a common language able to identify a set of elements that determine the level of culture of a production.

The important features of the coordinate image are:

The logo has to be sufficiently dynamic in order to allow the declination in different country of Manufacture

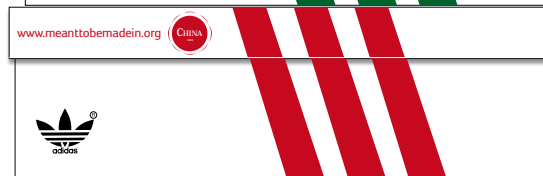
It must have two levels of reading, one with all the information, included the full name of the certification, and one that simply presents the place of Manufacture without any text around.

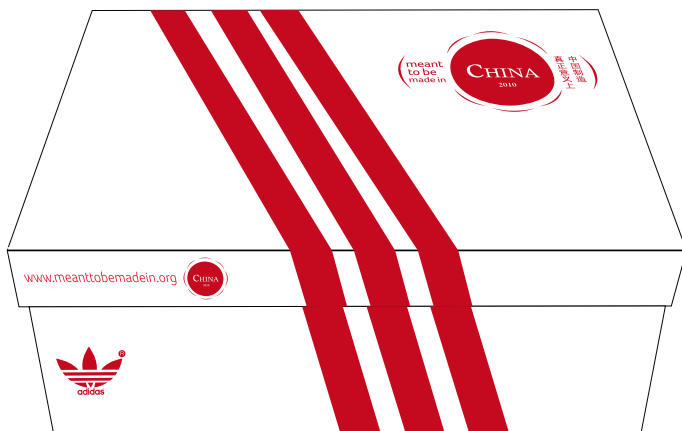
The logo will be the representation of the 8 qualities of culture, even though it will not be directly understandable by the customer it would be important to recall this concept also on the logotype.

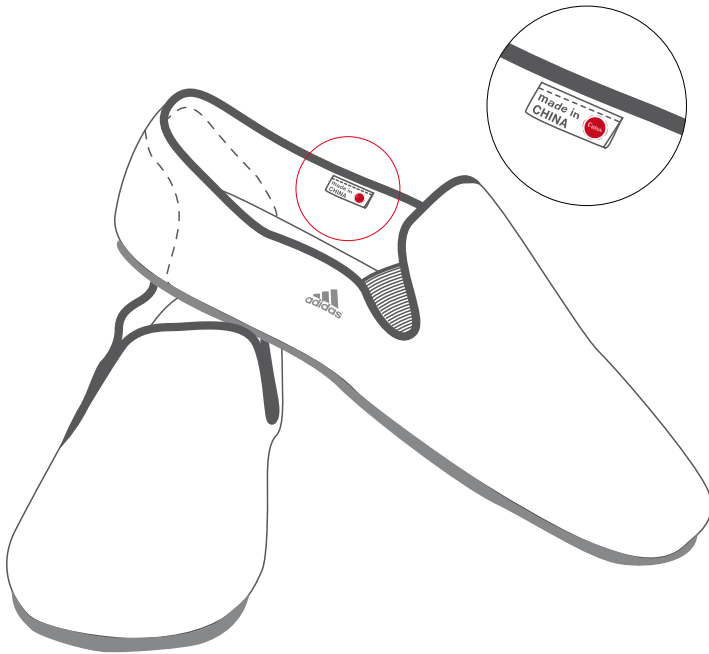














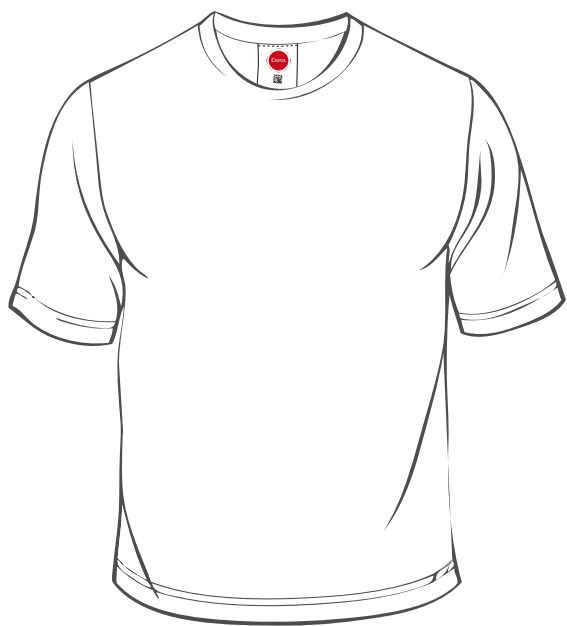
124535803

www.meanttobemadein.org



This product could not be
produced anywhere else.
It is meant to be made in the
place where its features
belong to. Traditions and
Culture are at the origin of
this product.

www.meanttobemadein.org



13 The system

Meant to be made in China is a certification that guarantees the cultural approach of the production. The project's aim is not to design a certification in all its parts, how to get it and what are the agencies that will provide the certification, but it is more concentrated on the system of evaluation of an object.

This thesis wants to create a common language able to describe a culturally sustainable production.

In this chapter I will describe briefly the system that I imagine will be developed; the system that allows the certification to end up on the products and in the companies.

13.1 Certification characteristics

Meant to be made in, is a conformity label, it is a distinctive sign applied on a product and its packaging after a series of tests and quality checks.

It testifies that the labeled object owns the specific characteristics defined by the norm taken as a reference.

It is a volunteer conformity label, it testifies that the products have the characteristics which go beyond law's requirements, and testify - to customers and clients - the quality of the product, in the wider meaning of the term.

The certification is the act with which a third part (neither the producer nor the client) declare that the product or the service is congruent with the specified requirement (or a norm).

The certifying organisms and the testing laboratories are “licensed”, periodically controlled by specific organisms in order to guarantee their competence and independence.

This is not a declaration of conformity, that is for those products that just show the reference of a norm guaranteed only by the producer, who - under his own responsibility - declares that the product is conform to a given norm.

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